

East Ridge High School Cross Country

Senior Class of 2015

Memories, Destinations and Dreams



This is another large senior class of Cross Country runners! Coach Ness, Coach Gramer and I are so happy with the group— their accomplishments, the way they represented our communities and school and their great work ethic. Some of them have run on the team all of their high school years and still some others have run since middle school (8th grade and even 7th)! You have contributed to the excellent tradition this team has. Thank you, seniors, for leading the team this year and for many, running a lot of previous seasons. From this day forward, you are forevermore an East Ridge Cross Country Alumni. You are always welcome here. We will miss you a lot!

-Coach Cronin

Andrew Berg ~ Parents: Brooks & Linda Berg

I joined the team when I was 14 because I love running and my older brother Carter was a charter member of the team. He always preached to me how awesome all of his cross country teammates and experiences were and how at home he felt with the team. I also wanted to get more in shape and find some new friends before I started high school.



My favorite cross country memory was after the Milaca Mega Meet in 2014 when Nathan Strom, Tony Cauthorn, Noah Wondimu, and I came across the Rum River on our cool down. It was pretty awesome as we waded out into the freezing cold water and braved the strong current to enjoy a cool luxury while waiting for the JV runners to go by. I saved a few rocks from the occasion.

My favorite cross country course is the University of Minnesota Golf Course. It is on that course that my character has been tested quite stringently. My junior year I made it on as the last varsity runner by a miracle and was able to successfully move up on the team, finishing as the fourth fastest on the team. However, this year, my character was tested in a different way. On that same course I missed qualifying for state individually, which snuffed out my season and my career. I had to remain strong and optimistic as the afternoon went on, and am still getting over it today. After that race, I had to be thankful for what I had accomplished for the cross country team over the course of my career and at the same time I had to accept that it was over.

My only advice for up and coming members of the team is that hard work pays off. If the going gets rough, it doesn't matter how slow you're running, as long as you're running. Just hang in there and you will be able to look back on it someday and be proud of your progress.

I would like to thank graduated senior Aaron Gorden for serving as my role model for the last three years. He has been a major influence on my work ethic and I strive to work half as hard as he did.

After graduation I am interested in attending the United States Naval Academy in Annapolis, Maryland. My ultimate goal is to get in and study Political Science, History, or Chinese. My other options include continuing my competitive running career at St. John's University in Collegetown, where I have been recruited.

See you in track!

Micaela Besser ~ I joined the ERHS cross country team this year as a senior year after doing another fall sport for too many years. I only wish that I would have started cross country much earlier. Several people have commented that I always seems happy when I am running and it is true - I really enjoy running. My dad and mom, Mike and Deb Besser, just smile back when they see me running.



I joined the team because there are so many great people on the team. The watermelon run was a favorite run of mine and my favorite race was conference because everyone PR'ed and had fun. I would like to thank Elizabeth Travis for sticking with me through the whole season and improving together every step of the way.

The random thought which I find runs through my head as I am running is "after this I am going to Brueggers." This is not a deep thought but is in fact what I usually find myself thinking. My advice to new runners is to stick with the sport, it's all worth it. The running quote which best resonates with my approach comes from Doris Brown Heritage: "Running is a road to self-awareness and reliance. You can push yourself to extremes and learn the harsh reality of your physical and mental limitations or coast quietly down a solitary path watching the earth spin beneath your feet."

I am looking forward to going to college for nursing and sticking with this running habit.

Emily Betz ~ When I was an eighth grader, my parents suggested that I join the cross-country team, since I really liked track. I was not so sure. Practices every day and running four miles seemed insane to me. Eventually I was convinced because Molly McVey and I decided to join together. Now its five years later and I am done with my last high school cross-country race



ever. A lot has changed since I first joined the team as an eighth grader. I remember how terrified I was and how old the seniors and juniors seemed. Now I am that old senior, a senior with many memories throughout all of my seasons of cross-country.

Cross Country is unlike any other team that I have ever been on. The bond is so intense and the memories I will cherish forever, like the excitement of the very first watermelon run, ultimate frisbee, screaming songs at the top of our lungs on bus rides, conversations with Abbey Beissler on runs, running 10 miles to the Red Wing meet, Bailey asking everyone what they did today, cheering like crazy for our team as well as random teams plus so much more. I cannot forget about all the pasta party memories such as climbing the hill at Taylor Rumpca's pasta party, the laughs at the pasta party before state this year, singing around the piano, and sitting around the bonfire telling jokes and riddles. The food at the pasta party is always the best and the desserts and pasta are my favorite it was also fun when Brenley brought yellow watermelon.

Although the team is my favorite part about cross-country, I can honestly say that I really do like running (most of the time at least). My favorite course is probably falcon ridge because it is flat and a quick course. I want to thank the coaches for supporting me and helping me throughout my running career and I want to thank past captains who have been leaders and role models to me. I hope cross-country has the same positive impact on others as it has had on me. I want everyone to continue the legacy that cross country has and keep the bond strong. Really cherish every moment of cross country because even if you are an eighth grader and people say you still have lots of time, before you know it you will be a senior and wondering where the time went.

Emily Burlog ~ parents: Debbie and Chris Burlog

I ran track my freshman year, and the girls I ran track with convinced me to join the cross country team the following year. It was one of the best decisions I've ever made.



My favorite cross country memory was when Megan Dierberger, Olivia Hummel, Erin Kenney and I chalked the cross country pavilion with inspiration quotes and "Picasso-like" artwork. Or, giving my final motivational speech and leading the cheer at the last sections race, bringing the JV squad to victory.

My favorite course to run is Conference. It's flat, and I always PR for the year.

I believe the ERHS cross country team is a team for the books. I've never met as many extremely talented/hard working/awesome/slightly insane people in my entire life. It takes a certain individual to run cross country, because running for fun... is really not that fun. I'm going to be honest, I don't really love running, but the social aspect this sport offers is what I believe made being a part of the cross country team so great.

I want to thank Erin Kenney for being the best running buddy I've ever had.

I just want the team to remember these words when I'm gone, "the faster you run, the faster you're done."

After graduation, I would like to attend UND (University of North Dakota).

My favorite pasta party food is the gluten-free food #celiacprobs



I'm **Emily Chandler** and I have been on this team for a solid 2 years. I haven't been on the team for a long time but I still felt like I was part of the cross country family. During my freshman and sophomore year it seemed as though Emily Betz would never go one week without saying "you should join cross country!". When I was a junior I finally decided to join the team. Joining the cross country team was one of the best decisions that I made and I wish I would have joined sooner. I still can't believe I'm done with my senior season of cross country. I may not miss doing intervals at Bailey or running up pipeline but I will miss all of the good times we had at pasta parties and meets.

Gabby Crumley ~ I have been running cross Country at East Ridge for six years and I really have loved being part of this team. When I joined the team in seventh grade I was really excited to meet new people and be a part of a team. Over the past years I have meet so many wonderful people that have become really good friends of mine that I wouldn't have meet if I hadn't joined cross country. I also joined of course because I enjoy running. In seventh grade when the team was much smaller we were like a little family and if it wasn't for the captain Aaron Lawrence, coach Cronin, and the other people I meet that year I probably wouldn't have enjoyed it as much as I did.



Besides practice, pasta parties and bus rides were always fun and lots of good memories were always made at them. One of my favorite memories was one of the captain's practices when I was in eighth grade and this was the time I really decided that I loved cross country. I was running with Zach and Aaron and Roman that day and we were just running and I can't remember why it was so much fun but that memory is always the first to pop into my head whenever I think about cross country.

Marguerite Crumley ~ This was my 3rd season of running cross country. I joined the team because I wasn't doing any fall sports, my sister had done it for 3 years prior to me joining, and everyone who I knew that did cross country loved it. It's hard to choose just one favorite



moment because there are so many, but one time I was running the radio route with Shayda and Ciara and a few others, and Shayda sang almost the whole time, which helped me realize you could have fun during a run, even if the running itself wasn't always fun. Other memories included the team bonding, aka singing and ultimate Frisbee, at the pasta parties, ceasar salad and pumpkin bars (also at the pasta parties), watermelon runs, the finish line at meets, the bus rides, and meeting all of the great people in cross country. My favorite course to run at was Blaine because it was a nice and steady course and I liked the loops which made it not feel too long, and it always was cooler and raining. People who helped me in my running career would probably be my friends and sister, because they pushed me when I didn't think I could go faster or longer, and helped me become a better runner.

Quote: "Life isn't about waiting for the storm to pass...It's about learning to dance in the rain." - Vivian Greene

Rain or shine, you will still have practice, so just have fun and make the best of it.

My name is **Maria Daubenger** and I'm the daughter of Mark and Nancy Daubenger. This is my second year as a cross country runner. Outside of cross country, I'm involved in competitive dance at Woodbury Dance Center and with the East Ridge Dance Team. Being a



dancer, I never would have imagined myself running with a cross country team as the sports are so different. However, I joined cross country after many years of being encouraged by my friends Emily Betz and Molly McVey to join and I definitely wish I would have listened to them sooner because it was one of the best decision I've ever made to join the team.

Out of all the many amazing memories I have with the team, one of my favorites was the Red Wing meet both years where we made a tunnel for people at the Red Wing meet and cheered on Trung Nguyen and any other runners from all of the schools at the meet that could use the motivation. We were united as a family and we encouraged other runners to push themselves and not give up. I also love all the unforgettable little memories

made at the pasta parties like ending of each party with everyone singing together as we gathered around Andrew Berg playing the piano. With that, it's hard to forget all the amazing food the families provided for us. My favorite pasta party food would have to be all the desserts especially pumpkin bars. One of my favorite meets we had was the conference meet. I PRed there both years along with a lot of other runners and I loved seeing how excited everyone was about their results.

I want to thank everyone on the team for being so supportive and fun to be around in addition to all three coaches for continually pushing me to be my best and being so encouraging! I also want to thank my running buddies for entertaining me every day and pushing me to be my best at practice. Also, thank you Emily Chandler for going to my first captain's practice with me last year and running with me even though I was nowhere near in good running condition. With that, thank you for continuing to run with me all the way through the conference meet of our last year where we could finish the race together after pushing each other throughout the entire race. Finally, to all the runners who still have another year or more of cross country, make every practice, every pasta party, and every meet worthwhile because your years on the team will go faster than you can ever imagine. Thank you all for being a wonderful CC family!

Hello, my name is **Megan Dierberger** and I have been on the team for four years. The summer before freshman year, my brother Tom encouraged me to come to a captain's practice to see what cross country was like and also in hopes that I would join. I thought I would never



participate in a running sport, but I loved the outgoing and energetic people so I decided to give it a try. I am so glad I stuck with cross country because I consider all of you my family. 😊

Throughout the four years I have been on the team we have made countless memories. A couple of my favorite memories were when Emily Burlog and I gave a pump up speech to the JV girls before the Sections meet this year and also when several girls and I cheered on everyone at every race during the Milaca meet. The pasta parties have always been a favorite part of cross country. My favorite pasta party food is definitely the warm and homemade chocolate chip cookies! My favorite course to run is Blaine because the course is close together so there are many spots where teammates can

cheer for each other and make us run faster. I would like to thank my lovely parents Fran and Peg Dierberger for always encouraging me to do my best and pushing me to perform to the best of my abilities, and also Olivia Hummel for always being a friend and running buddy to count on.

I cannot believe my high school cross country season is over; it has been the best four years of my life. I would like thank all of you, coaches and teammates, for always being there for me and making my cross country experience unbelievable. Keep on running and carrying on the traditions, and make the Running Raptors proud.

Brenley Goertzen ~ Parents' names: Kendra and Tim Goertzen

I joined the team after hearing about cross country from family friends. I had success at club track as a middle schooler so my parents signed me up for cross country and I have been on the team for 5 years.



My favorite XC memory is learning the girls varsity had qualified for Nike Nationals last year. The excitement from the community and school, and most importantly my teammates was priceless.

My favorite course is the Section course (University of Minnesota XC course). I love this course because I always run great times. I enjoy the hills and scenery that the course is famous for.

I would like to thank my parents for everything they have done for me during every year of cross country. The encouragement I have received from both of them before, during, and after races is something I'll always cherish. They have each greatly impacted my running career in so many positive ways. I would also like to thank the coaches: Coach Ness, Cronin and Gramer. They have each been instrumental figures in my life on and off the course.

Message to the team: East Ridge cross country will always have a special place in my heart. Try to remember that running always comes from within the runner (what you put in is what you get out). No matter how well of a runner you believe yourself to be, you will always have an extraordinarily loving team and coaching staff behind you. One of my favorite quotes about running comes from Canadian elite runner, Melissa Bishop: "You can't be the best right away, you have to take advantage of every opportunity that comes your way, take everything in stride and enjoy all the steps."

Favorite pasta party food: THE PASTA!

Hello!

My name is **Shayda Gounili** and my parents are Shirene and Farhad. I have been on Cross Country for the past two years and I must thank Emily Betz and Molly McVey for bringing me



into the family. I was hesitant to join CC in 11th grade because hearing your friends talk about how much they enjoy running makes you question their sanity. I finally signed up after being reminded that there were weekly pasta parties. I never imagined that some of my best high school memories would be made while crammed around a piano as we sang anything from Christmas songs to Frozen.

My favorite CC memory was Conference this year because so many people had reached their goals and I reached mine in addition to setting a new PR. My favorite meet was Milaca because of the insane amount of participants and the crowds lining the finish.

I finally understand why people love running CC. It is the most supportive sport I have ever been in. You don't mind the sore legs, shin splints, and popping hips when you hear a teammate yell "You're looking strong, now go get the runner in front of you!" My advice is this; leave your heart on the course. There is nothing worse than finishing a race and knowing you could have run faster. In addition, take a step back every once and a while and realize just how far you've come; you'll be surprised, I promise. Thank you for being my family, I love you ERCC.

Hey I'm **Connor Lejcher**, this was my first year running Cross Country and I would like to thank my parents, Luke and Kathie, for always supporting me whether on the course this year or off the course throughout all of high school. During each of my high school years I always had a gut feeling to do Cross Country, especially when driving and having to wait for the "army" of Cross Country runners to go by at a stop sign or round about. This summer going into my senior year I finally made the decision to join the East Ridge Cross Country team, a decision I'm proud to say that I will never regret. In this short one year season there have been so many awesome memories made that I will carry for the rest of my life. One of these great memories was texting Blake Slette, before the season had even began, about where to get proper running shoes after I learned the shoes I had previously bought from Kohl's just weren't going to cut it. My favorite course to run on would easily be the U of M's golf course. On this course I remember running past Coach Ness, running up a hill, running down a hill, and running up another hill and at the top of that second hill still being able to hear Coach cheer for me from which felt like over 100 meters away!



Don't get me wrong, running is great, but the friendships made from this team are even greater. There were so many people who I didn't know before cross country, and after about a week into practice I had already felt like I had joined a family. The person who I would like to thank for helping me this season would be THE Andrew "BT" Berg, who was a great captain, a great pianist, and a great entertainer. Trust me if you had to run 10 miles at practice one day, you would also want Berg to run next to during a run that took over an hour to finish. To the East Ridge Cross Country team thank you so much for making this season a blast! I couldn't have asked for anything more. Final words of advice to future runners "RUN LIKE IT'S THE LAST CHOPPER COMING OUT OF NAM!!!"

Julia Lewis ~ parents Angelique & Glenn Lewis

I have been a member of the cross country team for three seasons. Coming into my Freshman year my parents wanted me to join cross country. I was hesitant because I had been a sprinter for many years before and didn't think I would enjoy running miles and miles. As expected, the first few weeks of practice were tough but I grew a strong mentality quite fast. I have learned that it is very important to try new things that are out of your comfort zone through joining CC. Throughout the seasons during a difficult run/race I would ask myself: "Why am I doing this?" but as soon as I was done I would think about tomorrow when I can do it all over again. After every practice I felt I became better and stronger mentally. CC is where I have made some of the best memories in my high school career. The other team members really made a difference during my time in cross country. The many friends I have made pushed me to keep going and above all made the experience fun. The bond within the team is unlike any other sport I have participated in and it is what I'll miss the most along with the pasta parties! Track & Field has always been my favorite sport but it lacks the unique team bond that we had in CC. I already knew I loved running but not in the way I do now after cross country. I saw running only in the perspective of quick 200m sprint but the long distance running I have acclimated to will benefit me more into the future. I have learned many valuable lessons from cross country that will benefit me for the rest of my life. I will continue to run as much as possible because I know I am capable of running long distances and can do it on my own. Besides the team members that I have looked up to, I cannot thank all the coaches enough for their support as well. The coaches have motivated me to keep trying and strive for improvement. My favorite CC course would be either at Falcon Ridge or Milaca. I have always performed well at Falcon Ridge and I just really like the course. The Milaca meet has also been really fun to be a part of. The course is more difficult but I enjoyed the scenery there. I am so happy I ran Cross Country and got to be a part of such a great team! I am going to miss all of this so much.



"Running is nothing more than a series of arguments between the part of your brain that wants to stop and the part that wants to keep going."

I'm **Katie Marcus** (Parents: Arlen & Barb Marcus) and I've been on the CC team for two years and loved every minute of it! I started long distance running as a junior, I wanted a fall sport that I loved with people I like to be around and that I could be competitive in. I found cross-country after Molly McVey and Emily Betz told me how much they enjoyed being on the team and going to pasta parties. My favorite food would definitely have to be the brownies and desserts. ☺ When I started running I had missed the summer training season so I started out pretty slow. But that's the thing about cross-country; whatever your running speed there is always someone else to run with. As I started appreciating running the longer distances I also began to realize that some of my favorite moments with my CC team were when I was cheering on my teammates who were in the other races and being cheered on in return. Thanks for that guys!! This year I really need to thank Karla for being my all time running buddy. For pushing me in practice and pulling me along in meets. Thanks for a great season Karla!



To the rest of the Team: "The body can stand almost anything. It's the mind you have to convince."

Always go for your personal best it's only tiring for a little while at the end. I love you all with all my heart. Thanks for being my family and for two amazing years of running!

Hi! I am **Molly McVey**, and I am the daughter of Mary and Jim McVey. My plans for next year are to go to college (what college is TBD), and study occupational therapy or nursing. I have been on the cross country team for 5 years, and time flew by. It seems like it was just yesterday that I was starting my first day of cross country as an 8th grader. I was in track in 7th grade at Lake Middle School and both Emily Betz and I were talking about how we liked running long distance, but not around a track. That is when our moms got together and talked to us about the cross country. We both agreed to do it if the other one did it. I came in the first day not knowing anyone or about how the practices would be run. All I knew was that it was going to be a lot of running. And I was right.



Throughout the years in cross country there have been many memories. I do not have a favorite memory because I cannot possibly narrow down all the good times I have shared with people on this team. Although there are specific memories that I will remember for the rest of my life (like climbing up a huge hill at Taylor Rumpca's house the night before Conference, the infamous pasta parties, or when we all made a tunnel for people to run through at the end of the Red Wing meet), all of them have had an equal effect on my experience on this team; and while I cannot remember every day of practice, I know that each day held its own small memories that are all equally important to making the sport as enjoyable as it is. I do not think that I would have done it this long if it had not been for the great atmosphere that both the coaches and teammates produce each practice. I cannot express the magnitude of my gratitude towards my coaches or teammates because that would take up too many pages, nor could I express it in words; so for now, I can only say that I cannot thank you enough.

The only advice I have for the team for next year is to not take any day for granted. Treat every day like it is your last day spent at the pavilion. Don't go to practice wishing that you skipped, because you will be heartbroken once you realize that you will never have the opportunity to be lectured by Coach Cronin about shoes, scolded by Coach Ness because you walked back from intervals, or encouraged by Coach Gramer when she bikes past you. Because there will come a day when you do not have the option of going to practice because you are a senior and yesterday was your last meet. May the course be with you.

My name is **Waverly Moline**, my parents are Carol and Michael Moline. This season was my first year on the cross country team. The reason I joined the cross country team was to meet new people and keep in shape for the lacrosse season. My favorite memory of the season



would be the very first race I ran in. The feeling that I got every time I crossed the finish line was unforgettable. My favorite course was St. Olaf, the reason for this decision is because this was the most memorable run for me and most importantly it was the first course that I ran at. This is a very unique sport and only a select few are able to run the cross country season year after year, and I applaud them. Hands down this was the hardest sport I have ever participated in. I would like to thank my parents but most importantly, my dad. My dad is a very experienced runner, he has ran a handful of marathons. Whenever I have a question he will respond with a real life example from his running career to answer my question. For the upcoming runners that are trying this sport out for the first time, the quote I would give them is. Things come easier as time goes on. The reason I give this quote is because the beginning of the season it was very difficult to get the motivation to continue, but as the season progresses the running got easier. As for my other hobbies I play varsity lacrosse and I am also a cashier at Kowalski's Markets in Woodbury. After I graduate I plan on being a Speech-Language pathologist in an elementary school or an elementary school teacher (kindergarten). My favorite pasta party food would definitely be all of the dessert that was available.

My name is **Trung Nguyen**, son of Thach Nguyen and Tai Huynh. I have been on the cross country team for a mere two years and I cannot express in words how much I wish I would have joined sooner. I involuntarily joined the team when my brother forced me to do something with



myself rather than sit around at home playing video games. As much as I hated the idea of running, I am extremely grateful for the opportunity to meet such a wonderful, diverse, and friendly group of people. There are far too many memories that I can recall within the limit of words: there was the "bridge" that the entire team formed for me at Redwing (they did it both years!), there was the very first meet I ran at the Apple Jack Invitational in Lakeville where I collapsed as soon as I finished the race, and there are the better-than-life pasta parties where the entire team sang their hearts out. My favorite course must be Lakeville because that was where my journey in cross country began. I don't think I would have ever made it through eleventh and twelfth grade without the team and the sport. I would like to thank the coaches for not giving up on me when I wanted to give up on myself. I would also like to thank the people who cheered extra loud for me during the races and giving me that boost at the end (essentially the entire team). Running was a great way for me to release any stress, anger, anxiety, or fear and just be released of those negative emotions for that short period of time during practice. Life was becoming an illness and running was the medication. I am having some trouble understanding that I'll never be on a team again, so I would like the rest of the team to cherish the time they have left and form as many relationships as they can with as many people they can. I never would have made it through cross country without the encouragement of everyone, even the people who rarely spoke to me. Anyone can have a huge impact on another person and that is why I love the team. "I'll see you in the future when we're older and we are full of stories to be told. Cross my heart and hope to die, I'll see you with your laughter lines."

My name is **Caleb Nunn**. My parents are Les and Lori Nunn. I've been a part of the East Ridge Cross Country team for three great years. I joined this team because of a friend, Blake Slette, who told me that running was fun, though at the time I didn't believe him.



I have a lot of great memories of being on this team; among my favorites are the times we would play rugby after practice with Dylan Brooks, the rides home from meets when we would sing at the top of our lungs, and the time Trung, Blake, and I worked the water station at the triathlon, and Coach chastised me for the fuzzy dice on my rearview mirror, later admitting that he had a pair himself.

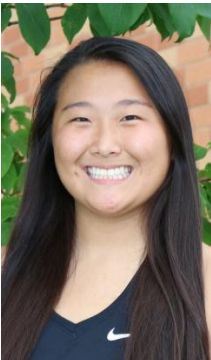
I don't think I have a favorite CC course because wherever we go, I have a great time with my teammates. Overall, I am so glad that I got the chance to be a part of this team, this family. I want to thank my parents for encouraging me to work harder and harder each year.

What is my message to my team? Well Ralph Waldo Emerson once said "Our chief want is someone who will inspire us to be what we know we could be." I hope that each person on the team will strive to be that someone for those around them, and not just for those on the team. I've seen what our team can do; how we can positively affect our community, and I know that you all can and will continue to uphold this tradition. After I graduate from East Ridge High School I plan to study Mechanical Engineering and continue my love of music. I will continue to write and record, and hey who knows, I might make it big!

Now onto the most important part of this bio: What is my favorite pasta party food? This has been an extremely difficult question to ponder because everything we have at pasta parties is tied for first place. The bread, the salad, the pasta, the brownies, the fruit, the deserts; they've all fought for my affection. However, we didn't name them "Salad Parties" or "Bread Parties." They are Pasta Parties, and spaghetti and meatballs is where it's at.

Ciara Riley ~ Parents: Ray and Marilyn Riley

I have been on the team for three awesome years



Why I joined: Before cross country I had never been on a sport, but I wanted to join cross country because I remember hearing all the fun stories from my friends that were on the team and it sounded like an awesome sport.

Favorite CC Memory: It's hard to pick just one favorite cc memory. One of the funniest moments I remember was on my first day of cross country practice of my first year. Coach Ness was in charge of reading out all of the girls' names to take attendance and he was struggling just a little with the names. My soon to be good friend's name, Marguerite, came up on the list and coach Ness proudly called out, "Margarita!" Everyone laughed and I remember Bailey Ness was explaining to her dad that it was "Marguerite" and asking him why someone would name their daughter margarita. It was a good way to break the ice for the first cross country practice! Marguerite also got the "Margarita"

award that year at the cross country banquet.

Favorite CC Course: My favorite CC course is definitely the meet at Falcon Ridge. Every year the team does so well and a lot of people get their personal records so everyone is in high spirits after that meet. It's a super-fast course and it's always a nice one to run on.

Random thoughts: Cross Country and running in general is probably the biggest love/hate relationship I have ever had with something. It's been a great experience, one that's not easy, but one that I won't forget.

Thanks: Overall I want to thank the Coach Cronin, Coach Ness, and Coach Gramer. I especially want to thank Coach Gramer; she's one the nicest people I've ever met and she always cheers the team on, listens to you, and gives great advice! Of course I want to thank the team. Without the team I don't think I would have continued to keep running with cross country; the team makes cross country fun, hilarious, and amazing.

Encouragement: Enjoy every moment of cross country and high school, because before you know it you will be a senior wondering where the time went!

Future: Go to college!

Favorite pasta party food: Caesar Salad

I'm **Blake Slette**, and I've been on the East Ridge cross country team since I started in 8th grade - a grueling yet fantastic 5 years. I joined the team mainly due to the influence of my older brother, Alex, who convinced me that I should join. I agreed after much debate, mostly due to my desire to do *something* with my time, to meet people only a couple years after moving to Woodbury, and to obtain at least some degree of athleticism - which I severely lacked. My shot in the dark certainly paid off, and as I reflect back on it now, I've decided that my decision to join this team was most likely the best decision of my life. Had I not joined this team, I would be a drastically different person, lacking many aspects this team has brought me: experience, physical condition, attitude, friends, and of course, memories. I have great memories from my years on this team, from climbing a bluff during a pasta party in 9th grade, to climbing hills in Death Valley workouts throughout the first 4 years. But, the best memories were always from the normal weekly routine of cross country: the practices, the pasta parties, and the meets. My favorite practice route has ended up being the St. Paul route, my favorite pasta party food is still Megan Schiferl's homemade fudge, and my favorite course remains to be St. Croix Bluffs. The general, routine things that I quickly got used to, such as checking in to practice, conversing at the pavilion, listening to coaches give their daily talk, finding out the route for the day, running the route while conversing or sometimes running alone, and finally getting in line to drink water at the end, will be the things I will miss most about cross country.



There have been quite a lot of people I need to thank for helping me throughout my career in cross country, including my brother Alex for getting me to join, and my parents for always providing support. I can't be grateful enough for each of the coaches: Coach Cronin, who assisted me in every way possible, whether it be explaining to me things that I didn't understand or simply conversing with me during routes and making the run more bearable; Coach Gramer, who encouraged me and supported everyone constantly from either the edge of the race course or from her bike during practice; and Coach Ness, who never stopped pushing me to go faster, run farther, and train harder, so that I could reach my potential. I also hope that I was able to assist other athletes as much as they and the coaches assisted me. If I can add anything else now, it's two things: that running cross country, no matter how difficult it can be, is never a bad thing, and that being on the cross country team has many more physical, social, and mental benefits than many people on the team may realize at the moment, even if you don't like running. Besides, in the end, there are much worse things than running, like black licorice. It's gross, and it's not good for you. So, if you are ever lacking motivation while running or forgetting why you choose to do it, just remember that it is always better than eating black licorice, because black licorice is disgusting. That's all there is to it. How else do you think I managed to make it through running all 5 years of cross country?



Elizabeth Travis

Your name: Elizabeth Travis

Your parents' names: Susan and Jeff Travis

How many years you have been on the team: 1

Why you joined: I like running and meeting new people

Favorite CC memory: Cuddling with Elli, Joanna and Brenley before warming up

Favorite CC course: Conference because I PRed

Favorite pasta party food: Bread

These seniors are an important members of the ERHS Raptors Cross Country team, but no additional information was shared. We wish them treasured memories and good luck with their future destinations and dreams.



Megan Ollrich



Braeden Yeo

Thank You
SENIOR
Cross Country Runners