

[View this email in your browser](#)



Students in Mrs. Simmons' art class chose to work on their class assignments outside on the Jepsen Family Legacy Plaza. Peaceful and quiet, with a wide open sky to let their imaginations soar!



CENTRAL HIGH SCHOOL
FOUNDATION

EAGLE NEWS
September 2022



Dear Supporter,

Fall is here! Central recently opened its doors to the Class of 2026, and we want to welcome them to the Eagle Family!

Thank you to everyone who attended the unveiling of the Gale Sayers Memorial Statue. The statue sits underneath the Victory Eagle in front of Seeman Stadium for anyone who wants to drive by and check it out!

The Central High School Foundation has many great events coming up, including our [Passing Periods: Alumni Luncheon Series](#) and the [2022 Hall of Fame!](#) Register today to join us! More information can be found in this newsletter below.

Keep your eyes open for our 2022 Annual Report! Every graduate and

supporter will receive one in the mail over the next couple of weeks. This year's annual report details what was accomplished during the 2021-22 fiscal year. I want to thank our Creative Director and Database Administrator, Josh Bucy, for creating the Annual Report. A reminder that if you haven't received our mailings recently, we encourage you to [update your record](#) to ensure that we have your current contact information.

Finally, 2022 [class reunions](#) are underway! If you have a reunion this year, scroll to the end of this email for the most up-to-date information. Also, make sure you [update your record](#) on our website so that your physical invitation and event communications are mailed to the correct address. This is especially important for recent graduates; we often have parental addresses instead of graduate addresses.

Thank you for helping perpetuate 165 years - and counting - of tradition and excellence!

Once an Eagle, Always an Eagle!

Michele Roberts



Executive Director

Gale Sayers Statue Unveiled at First Home Football Game



Click on the image to watch a video of the Unveiling Ceremony!

The unveiling of the [Gale Sayers](#) memorial statue took place outside Seemann Stadium at 6:00 p.m. before Central's first home football game of the season



against Omaha Northwest on Friday, August 26, 2022. This special event was open to the public. Click on the image above to watch a video of the unveiling ceremony!

Gale Sayers (Class of 1961), a great Eagle athlete, friend of the Central High School Foundation, and former Chicago Bears star, passed away September 22, 2020. Gale is considered one of the greatest running backs in the history of the National Football League. He is the youngest person to ever be inducted into the Pro Football Hall of Fame at age 34. /

Am Third, his autobiography which inspired the film *Brian's Song*, was critically acclaimed. It told the story of his family, of the crippling knee injury that almost destroyed his career, and, most of all, it recalled the story of Gale's short but unforgettable friendship with Brian Piccolo. He was a member of the Central High School Hall of Fame NO COMMA and was a proud supporter of Central High School and the Central High School Foundation until the end of his life.

Littleton Alston, Eagle parent and owner of Alston Art Studio, was selected by the Central High School Foundation as the sculptor to design and construct this bronze statue. The Victory Eagle is forever soaring over one of Central's greatest athletes!

Remembering Rita Ryan

In Memoriam

La Magistra Rita Ryan



"Te amamus, Miss Ryan."

It is with great sadness that we share with you the passing of Central High School Eagle, Ms. Rita Ryan. Ms. Ryan served as Latin teacher at Central for 42 years and was a beloved member of the Eagle community.

If you would like to make a gift to help establish an endowed scholarship in Ms. Rita Ryan's name, you can do so by clicking the button below. When you make a memorial gift to the Foundation, a personalized card and acknowledgment will be sent to Ms. Ryan's family.

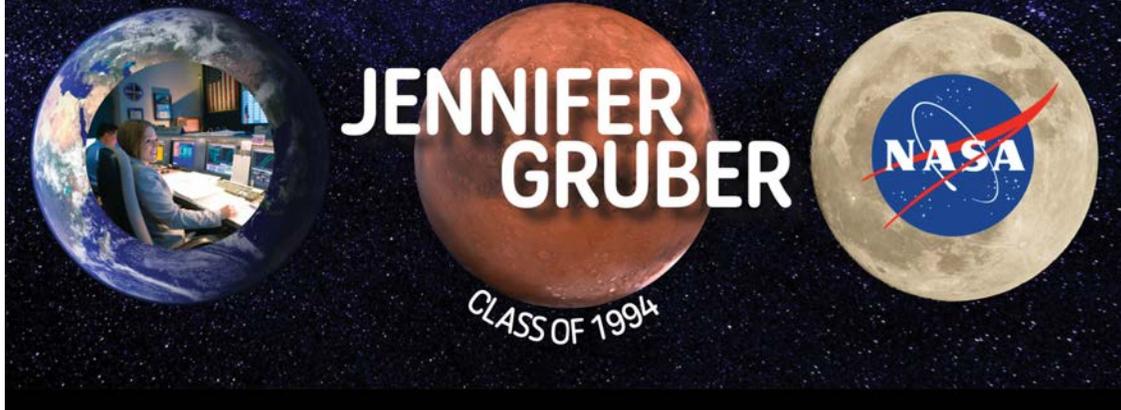
[Donate to Honor Rita Ryan](#)

Passing Periods: Jennifer Gruber, CHS 1994

The Central High School Foundation Presents
PASSING PERIODS ALUMNI LUNCHEON SERIES

Friday, October 21, 2022  The Field Club of Omaha

FEATURING NASA ADMINISTRATOR AND ENGINEER



Eagles all across Omaha are brushing shoulders for a quick hello during the Central High School Foundation's Passing Periods: Alumni Luncheon Series, and we hope to bump into you there! For \$20, you can enjoy a great meal, catch up with friends you haven't seen since first period, talk with teachers who you haven't seen since homeroom, and listen to our exclusive lineup of guest speakers.

Friday, October 21, 2022

11:30 am - 1:00 pm

Field Club of Omaha

3615 Woolworth Avenue

Omaha, NE 68105

Guest Speaker:

Jennifer Gruber, CHS 1994

An administrator and engineer for NASA, Jennifer is currently working on the Artemis Project. The Artemis Project is NASA's mission to return astronauts to the moon by 2024 and prepare the way for a human mission to Mars.

To register online, please register and pay using the online registration button below. You will receive a confirmation email upon completion of your online

registration and payment.

To register by mail, please mail your registration and check to:

Central High School Foundation
1111 N 13th Street Suite 318
Omaha, NE 68102-4252

If you have any questions, please contact Erika Buffington at 402-556-1996 or events@chsfomaha.org.

[Register to Attend Passing Periods](#)

Welcoming the 2022 Hall of Fame Inductees

The 23rd Annual CHS Hall of Fame will held Thursday, October 20, 2022, at Central High School. The Central High School Alumni Association is proud to induct ten individuals whose paths from the halls of Central High School led them to the highest levels of achievement in business and community service. [RSVP now](#) to come celebrate this special day with your fellow Eagles! Inductees are selected by the Central High School Alumni Association and the program is presented by the Central High School Foundation.

The dinner will be held at 6:15 pm in the Courtyard and the ceremony will take place at 7:30 pm in the Central High School Auditorium. Registration is \$60 per person, \$480 for a table of eight and \$600 for a table of ten. Please contact the Foundation office at 402-556-1996 with any questions or click the button below to register online.



Dr. Keith Bigsby, Distinguished

Educator. There's likely never been a stronger, more energetic advocate for the unique excellence of Central than Dr. Keith Bigsby. Not only did he serve as Central's 18th principal, he's continued to work tirelessly for the school as an executive for the CHS Foundation. As one nominator put it, Dr. Bigsby bleeds purple. A

native of Lincoln, Bigsby's passion for Central began in 1992 when Dr. G.E.

Moller asked him to lead Central's business/marketing/technology department. He went on to spend parts of three different decades at the school as a teacher, athletic coach and administrator. Bigsby rounded out a 32-year career with Omaha Public Schools by serving as CHS principal from 2010-2013. He has since remained a powerful voice for Central as a do-it-all representative of the Foundation. He's a liaison to staff and students who's also known by alums for his reunion tours. He's most proud to be father to three CHS graduates, including current Central teacher Casey Denton.



Stephanie Kurtzuba Coakley, CHS 1990. A

producer and actress, Kurtzuba has worked alongside some of entertainment's biggest names, including Al Pacino, Robert DeNiro and Leonardo DiCaprio. She landed her first local theater role at the age of ten and was hooked.

She co-captained the CHS Pom Squad and played the lead in the fall musical during her senior year. After graduating from NYU's Tisch School of the Arts, she debuted on Broadway in *The Boy From Oz*, starring Hugh Jackman. She originated roles in the Broadway casts of *Mary Poppins* and *Billy Elliot* and has performed at the Tony Awards and Carnegie Hall. She is known for her work in two Oscar nominated films from Martin Scorsese, *The Wolf of Wall Street* and *The Irishman*. She received acclaim for her work in the 2014 film adaptation of *Annie* and currently has roles on CBS' *Blue Bloods* and Paramount's *Tulsa King* starring Sylvester Stallone. As a producer, her television series *The 18th* is based on Omaha circa 1920.



Richard Fellman, CHS 1953. Fellman left his

mark in Omaha political circles as a candidate, office holder, and later an educator. At the University of Nebraska, he served as editor of *The Daily Nebraskan* and became a reporter for *The Lincoln Star* and The Associated Press. After graduating from law school at UNL he practiced for 44 years. The Democrat entered politics in the early 1960s and remained true to moderate

liberalism as the country moved to the right. He was appointed as a state senator, elected to the Douglas County Board of Commissioners (serving as chair), and won his party's nomination for Congress three times. He finished his career teaching political science at UNO for thirteen years, where in 2011

he received an award for teaching excellence. In 2015, he taught in Ukraine as a Fulbright Fellow and became the first American to receive an honorary doctorate from the school. In retirement, he writes. He joins his late wife Bev, longtime CHS French teacher, in the Hall of Fame.



Harry Gaylor, Distinguished Educator. Gaylor spent a remarkable 51 years as a classroom educator in OPS, highlighted by 36 years teaching at Central and leading the school's award-winning DECA program. Gaylor launched his teaching career at Tech High in 1969 before moving to Central in 1984 when Tech closed. He

taught marketing, coordinated student internships and mentored Central's DECA chapter, becoming a DECA fixture on the state and national level. More than that, he was always there for his students, whether offering encouragement or arranging transportation to events. He was also a respected teacher among his colleagues. He would do anything for the school, including serving as a videographer at Central events and activities, a service he provided for decades. Gaylor's dedicated work in education was honored with the Alice Buffett Outstanding Teacher Award in 1995, Ak-Sar-Ben's Ike Friedman Leadership Award in 1993, and he was named Central's Teacher of the Year in 2004.



Jennifer Gruber, CHS 1994. The NASA administrator and engineer is helping pioneer new frontiers in space, taking a lead role in upcoming missions that for the first time in a half century will send man back to the moon. After seeing the movie *All the Right Stuff* as a seven-year-old, Gruber was inspired to seek a career in

aerospace. The Rhodes Scholar earned a doctorate in engineering science from Oxford University before landing at NASA in 2002 and beginning her ascent in the agency's ranks. She served as a flight dynamics officer in the space shuttle program where she was responsible for determining the trajectory of the shuttle's launch and re-entry. Now as the cross-program integration lead for the human landing system of the upcoming Artemis moon missions, she is overseeing the development of the lunar lander that will bring astronauts to the surface of the moon. In doing so, she's also helping NASA take a giant leap toward its next goal – a manned flight to Mars.



Thomas Novotny, CHS 1965. As a public health professional, Novotny helped sound the alarm on the dangers of smoking both here and globally. After graduating from UNMC in 1973, he served in the National Health Service Corps before joining the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention as an epidemiologist in the Office of Smoking and Health. In that role, he contributed

to several Surgeon General's reports on the dangers of tobacco. Other CDC assignments included liaison to the World Bank, where he worked on analyses of economic aspects of tobacco and health, reform of Eastern European health systems and HIV/AIDS policy. He also served as Assistant Surgeon General and Deputy Assistant Secretary for International and Refugee Health before moving to academia in the University of California system. He has published 190 journal articles and four books. He also launched a nonprofit spotlighting the environmental damage caused by cigarette butts.



Christine Andreasen Pellman, CHS 1982. Few have been as devoted to Central as both a parent and an alumnus than Chris Pellman. As her own children went through Central, she served eight years as an officer in the school's PEP organization, including two terms as president. She chaired PEP's Holiday Tea event for several

years. Likewise, Chris has provided years of leadership for Central's Alumni Association, including serving four years as president and serving as chair of numerous committees and lending her IT skills to its web site. She also served on the CHS Foundation Rock the Nest Committee. Chris has devoted countless hours to supporting CHS students and staff and has been a strong advocate for Central before the OPS Board of Education. Chris' community spirit was not limited to Central. She also served as president of the PTA organizations at Boyd Elementary and Morton Middle School and volunteered for Girl Scouts, Children's Hospital and Keystone Little League.



Gennean Scott, CHS 1994. Scott has dedicated her career in the performing arts to increasing opportunity and diversity and now has a national stage to continue that work as the first director of Equity, Diversity and Inclusion for the Broadway League in New York. A dancer in her youth, she

won a talent competition while a student at Central that took her to New York City for her first glimpse of Broadway. She went on to become an educator and human resources administrator where she focused on teaching about unconscious bias. In 2013 she founded and directed a non-profit dance school to promote equity in the arts for Omaha youth. Beginning in 2014, Scott worked for Omaha Performing Arts as Vice President of Human Capital and Inclusion, conceiving and spearheading programs that increased and retained a diverse staff. Then in 2021, the Broadway League named her to lead its efforts to make New York's Broadway productions more diverse, both on and off the stage.



Joel Stebbins, CHS 1895. The award-winning astronomer pioneered the use of photoelectric photometry as a technique for measuring the size and distance of celestial objects. After receiving his doctorate from the University of California, he led the observatories at the University of Illinois and the University of Wisconsin. With a colleague, he pioneered photoelectric photometry, measuring light emitted by celestial objects to determine their size and distance from

Earth. The technique helped him make innumerable discoveries related to the Sun, other stars, the planet Uranus and interstellar dust. He was recognized with astronomy's Rumford Prize in 1913, the National Academy of Sciences' Henry Draper Medal in 1915 and a gold medal from the Royal Astronomical Society in 1950. Stebbins brought photoelectric photometry from its infancy in the 1900s to a developed, widely-used technique by the 1950s, one still in use today. Joel passed away in 1966 at the age of 87.



Michael Thompson, CHS 1955. Thompson broke new ground for people of color as a dentist and longtime officer in the U.S. Air Force. Thompson was a leader in Central's ROTC programs before going on to graduate from Creighton University and its dental school. He became the first African-American to graduate at

the top of a dental school class at Creighton. He then embarked on a 26-year Air Force career. During the Vietnam War, he provided dental care for servicemen from a base in Thailand. He climbed the officer ranks to colonel and became just the third Air Force dentist to be accepted into the Air War

College. He then helped oversee and inspect Air Force dental and medical facilities throughout the world, including serving as assistant medical director at Ramstein Air Force Base in Germany. His numerous military commendations included a Bronze Star, Meritorious Service Medal and National Defense Service Medal. Michael passed away in 2005 at the age of 68.

[Register for the Hall of Fame](#)

Announcing The 2022-2023 Generation "C" Chairs



The Central High School Foundation is proud to announce Charles "Chuck" Dickerson III, CHS 1959, and his wife, Judie, as the 2022-2023 Generation "C" Chairs.

Chuck Dickerson is part of a Central High School legacy dating back to 1900. Chuck was raised in Omaha and describes himself as a "died-in-the-wool Midwesterner." He graduated from Central in 1959 and attended Penn State University for his undergraduate degree.

After graduating from Penn State in 1963, Chuck served as a navigator and in communications and cryptology aboard the light cruiser *USS Springfield*, the flagship of the Sixth Fleet. He served on active duty for two years and in the reserves for another five before resigning his Navy commission in 1970. Following his time in the military, Chuck attended graduate school at the University of Wisconsin. Following graduation, he took a job with AT&T, where he worked for more than thirty years before retiring as a division technical manager in 1997.

His wife, Judie, is an alumna of the University of Iowa. She is a fourth-generation college graduate whose great grandfather was the first Black lawyer to pass the Illinois state bar in 1869. Together, the couple has two daughters, two granddaughters, and one grandson. In his retirement, Chuck started a company that assisted in the installation of an undersea internet cable from New York City to London. In addition, he taught at County College of Morris in Randolph, New Jersey, where Judie was working, and later

became an adjunct instructor at Fairleigh Dickinson University. Today, he and Judie volunteer for several nonprofit organizations, are active in the Episcopal Church, and are philanthropic supporters of multiple educational institutions including the University of Iowa, Penn State University, and the Central High School Foundation.

Chuck and Judie have been very involved with Central High School. During the unveiling of the Central High School Arts and Library Addition, the Dickerson, Myers, and Wright families honored their Eagle lineage with a Legacy paver donned with fourteen names of family members who had graduated from Central dating back to 1900. They recently endowed a scholarship for a graduating Eagle to continue their education. This award, named the Dickerson/Fletcher/McWilliams Scholarship, highlights the several generations of family members who have graduated from Central High School.

Join Generation "C" Today!

CHS Alumni Debuts Fashion for Cancer Survivors at Omaha Fashion Week



Yolanda (Smith) Harris, CHS 1993, debuted her lingerie line, Still A Lady, at Omaha Fashion Week in August! Yolanda created the line in 2019 following a cancer diagnosis.

Still A Lady is for women like Harris who have a colostomy bag. "I just knew

that I was chosen," Harris said. "I didn't know why, or whatever, but I always felt I was chosen for this."

Congratulations, Yolanda!

[Click Here to See KETV Coverage](#)

Central High School Foundation Hosts Welcome Back Lunch for Teachers!



The Central High School Foundation hosted a welcome back lunch for Central teachers before the start of the school at The Livingroom! Alumni and community support helps us show appreciation to our Eagle Educators!

[Click Here to Donate](#)

Snapshot: Central Welcomes The Class of 2026!



Central High School welcomed the Class of 2026! They had a great first day at the Nest and wrapped up their first day as an Eagle with a Freshman Pep Rally!

Class of 1967 Celebrates 55th Class Reunion



The Class of 1967 celebrated their 55th Class Reunion on August 12th & 13th! The theme was: "Cruising Down the CHS Highway Doin' 55 and Feelin' Fine!"

The Class Reunion Chair reported that, "Classmates from around the country reconnected and shared lighthearted, wonderful memories and had fun at the Purple Power Party at The Field Club of Omaha on Friday night. Classmates then toured Central High School on Saturday morning. The reunion concluded Saturday night at the Regency Marriott as the '67 Eagles enjoyed a fantastic dinner, program and music provided by former Rumbles Member Bob Ford!"

You can follow along with other class reunion recaps by visiting our [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), [Twitter](#), or [LinkedIn](#)!

[Class Reunion Schedule](#)

[Join the 1859 Society Today!](#)

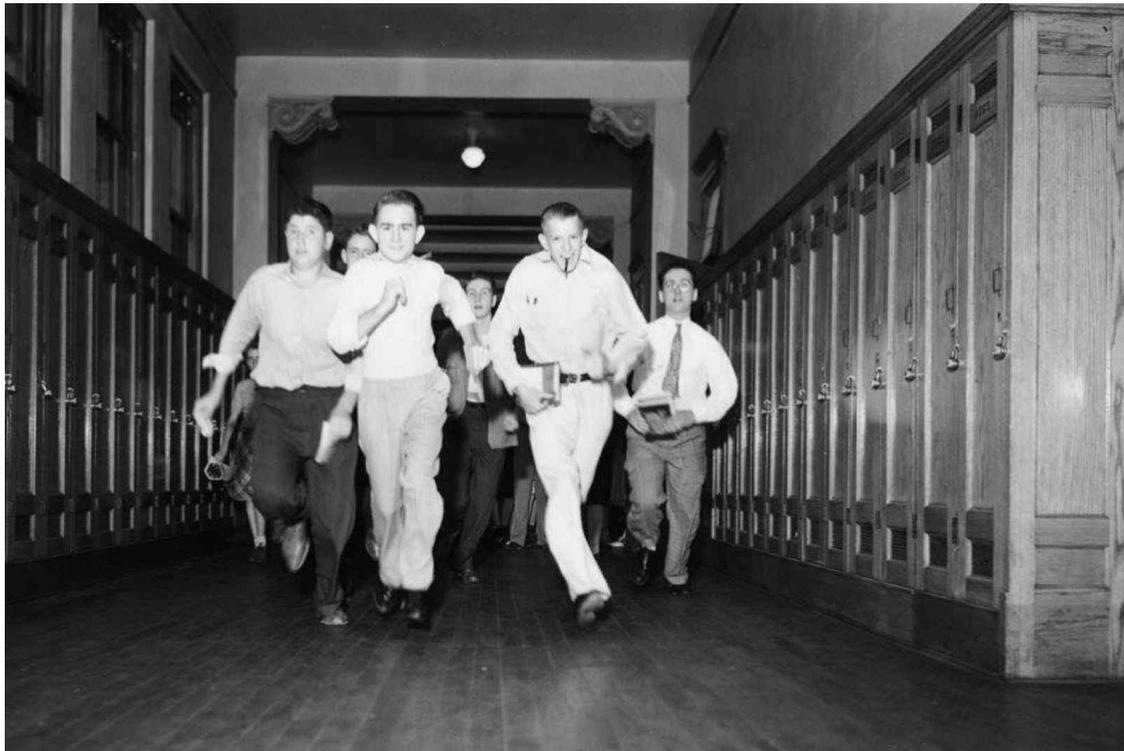


Named for the year of Central's founding, the 1859 Society honors donors who have included The Central High School Foundation in their estate plans. By arranging for such deferred gifts, alumni, parents and friends of CHS play a vital role in securing the future of Omaha's oldest educational institution. Combining financial planning, estate planning, and tax planning techniques, planned giving enables donors to make gifts of significance often with tax and financial rewards. If you're interested in joining the 1859 Society and making a

planned gift, contact Michele Roberts at the CHSF Office at 402-556-1996 or michele@chsfomaha.org.

[Click Here for the 1859 Society Brochure](#)

Share Your Memories From Your Time at Central!



2022 Class Reunion Schedule

Did you know that the Central High School Foundation collects the memories of our alumni to paint a full, bright picture of life at Central for future generations? In fact, you can read all of the memories others have submitted on our [website!](#)

We would love to hear from you!

Submit your memory to the Central High School Foundation!
You can also share photos of your time at Central, which will be entered into our archives!

[Click Here to Submit Your Memory](#)



Old friends reunited back at the Nest last year during the Class of 1991's class reunion!

The 2022 Reunion Season is upon us! Please look below for an update and a person of contact for your reunion. If you have any questions, please reach out to the Central High School Foundation.

[Class of 1962](#)

October 14–15, 2022

Please contact any of the committee members for information: Rochelle Sommer Ban, Patricia McFarland Bennett, Susan Gilinsky Cooper, Lois Greenberg Finkel, Dora Gerber Goldstrom, Susan Lucas, Deborah Barger Sandstedt, Beth Alexander Sargent, Linda Siref Simon, Pat Dunham Trotter, Terryl Milder Zacharia

[Class of 1968](#)

September 8-9, 2023

[Contact Pam Weiss Friedlander](#)

[Contact Joanne Wagner Givens](#)

Class of 1970

POSTPONED

July 25-26, 2025

[Class of 1971](#)

RESCHEDULED – October 7-8, 2022

Linda Niebauer, Danny Slosburg, Denny Brown
303-909-8227 (Linda)

linda.niebauer@cuanschultz.edu

[Join the 1971 Facebook Group](#)

Check out Omaha Central Class of '71 [website](#)

[Class of 1972](#)

October 7– 8, 2022

Nancy Johnson, Val (Acuff) Johnson, David Kutler, Michael Muskin

omahachs1972@gmail.com

[Join the 1972 Facebook Group](#)

[Class of 1978](#)

August 11-12, 2023

Contact [Sally Vrbanac Rehmeier](#) (402-670-8986)

[Class of 1982](#)

September 15-17, 2022

[Contact Joan Larsen](#)

If you are the reunion organizer for your class and haven't finalized a date for your 2022 reunion or would like to look at postponing or cancelling it, please [contact Erika Buffington at events@chsfomaha.org](mailto:events@chsfomaha.org) or call 402-556-1996.

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Foundation.**

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Amazon donates.

[Go to smile.amazon.com](https://smile.amazon.com)

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If you're buying Back to School supplies or books on Amazon, make



The Central High School Foundation has partnered with TAGG (Together A Greater Good) to provide an easy and free way to support the

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AmazonSmile is a website operated by Amazon with the same products, prices, and shopping features as [Amazon.com](https://www.amazon.com). The difference is that when you shop on AmazonSmile, the AmazonSmile Foundation will donate 0.5% of the purchase price of eligible products to the Central High School Foundation! Click below to get started shopping.

Foundation.

It's easy to do! Just go to the link tagg.today, snap a photo of your receipts from [participating businesses](#), and a percentage of your total will be donated to the Central High School Foundation. Visit their [website](#) to learn more!

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Are you on [Facebook](#)? How about [Instagram](#) and [Twitter](#)? Follow and Like us across the social media platforms to stay connected to other Central alumni, staff, parents and supporters, all while receiving the latest news. As we hit fan milestones on each platform we will be giving out great prizes! Keep an eye out!

Thank You to Our Adopt-A-School Partner



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