

## Advocate

Continued from page 1

Before the change, Evans worked with six different counties — Lincoln, Lyon, Murray, Pipestone, Redwood and Rock.

“Each one of those counties has had its own Relay for Life event for many years — some over 25 years,” she said. “Relayers are pretty tight-knit and love to support each other, so many would cross county lines if they saw a fundraiser going on that interested them.”

Evans said teams raise money for the ACS, relying mostly on donations from friends and family “through asks on Facebook or through luminaria sales.”

“For the past few years, our team has received large donations from local businesses such as Steve Miller at Southwest Insurance Services, Peterson Farms and the Pipestone systems Shetek Barn that (my son) Colin manages,” Evans said. “In 2020, we had to get extra creative, so we did a fun campaign with our grandson, Cason, where people sponsored him and pledged to give so much per mile that he rode horse. He raised over \$700!”

Evans will continue to work fulltime in her new position. While there will be challenges ahead, she feels prepared for anything.

“As we experienced every round of cuts and layoffs in the past nine months, I would find peace amongst the turmoil by simply praying, ‘Lord, your will be done,’” she said. “When I initially got the call offering me the Director position, I considered whether I wanted to take on the challenge, but then I thought about my prayer and felt God asking, ‘Did you mean it?’ I am humbled to have been slotted in this important position at such a critical time in our organization.

“I feel like my years of experience working with volunteers and mentoring new staff have prepared me for this role and that I’m where I’m supposed to be.”

When Evans started working for the ACS in September 2000, an office was opened in Marshall. She said the ACS opened offices in many different locations to see if they could better serve the volunteers and cancer patients by having that local presence.

“What we found was that cancer patients were still calling our hotline for resources rather than going to that physical location, so the decision was made in 2004 to close the office doors and use those much-needed funds to go toward the mission of saving lives through research, education, advocacy and patient services,” Evans said.

Evans has worked remotely ever since that time to help support volunteers in their efforts to raise money and awareness — mostly through our area Relay for Life events.”

“It has been a great honor and privilege to work alongside dedicated volunteers who work so hard to lessen the devastating impact of cancer,” Evans said.

Anyone can participate in Relay for Life events, as a survivor, caregiver, team captain, team member or volunteer. Donations are always welcome as well.

A typical RFL event includes pre-event fundraising, an opening ceremony, survivor and caregiver recognition, time to celebrate, luminaria lighting and a closing ceremony. The next Lyon County Relay for Life event is slated for Thursday, Aug. 19, 2021, beginning at 5 p.m. at Independence Park in Marshall.

“Our family will continue being involved on the local level through our Lyon County team,” Evans said. “We’d love to have other join in or support our team as well.”

To learn more, go to: [RelayForLife.org/LyonCountyMN](http://RelayForLife.org/LyonCountyMN).

Evans and her husband, Corey, have three adult sons — Colin, Derek and Colton. She said she loves to spend time with family, which includes riding horse and camping at Garvin Park. Evans also serves on the Lyon County Park Board.

“I thrive on adventure and extreme trail riding,” she said. “Last

year, I had the thrill of riding in other beautiful places like Wyoming and Montana, and I found my way down to Arkansas a few times — locations where I can truly be ‘off the grid’ and feed my soul.”



**At Left: Horse-back riding is one of Jennifer Evans' passions, along with being a cancer fundraiser and advocate. Below: Bob Hoff is pictured on his last ride together with his daughter, Jennifer Evans in 2011. Hoff died of lung cancer the following year.**  
Submitted photos

In the fall 2011, Evans spent time riding with her dad, Bob Hoff, along the Grand Mesa in Colorado. It turned out to be their last ride together as her dad was diagnosed with stage 4 lung cancer in January 2012.

“Like my husband’s parents, Dad, too, lost his battle to lung cancer very quickly,” she said. “I miss him more than words can say. Dad was so proud of the work I do with the ACS and was sure to add something about that every time he introduced me to anyone.”

During one of her dad’s appointments, Evans was reminded of the power of hope.

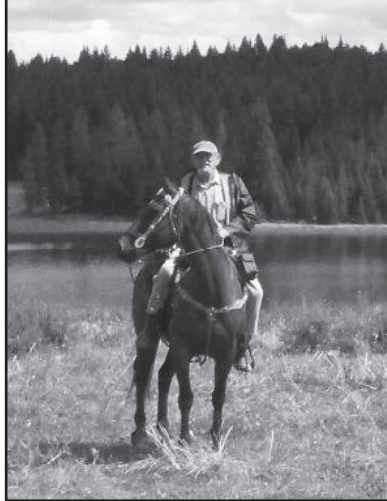
“One day while at the cancer center undergoing treatment, Dad introduced me to a nurse in his usual way,” Evans said. “She then proceeded to tell me about how she had recently been working with an amazing researcher who was being funded by the American Cancer Society. His discovery around the molecular subtypes of lung cancer targets the area where cancer mutates. This personalized therapy is having amazing results and I expect we are going to be hearing more and more about these advances.”

Evans said it was unfortunate that her dad did not find his cancer early.

“In January of 2013, the ACS announced a new screening to detect lung cancer,” she said. “If these scans and recommendations had been discovered a couple of years earlier, my dad might still be alive today. Believe me when I say this fight is urgent!”

While there is a long way to go, Evans knows that you also have to celebrate accomplishments along the way.

“We’ve seen tremendous progress in the 20 years that I’ve worked with ACS and as the death rates from cancer continue to decline, it feels good to know I’ve had a part in making that happen.”



## Trevor

Continued from page 1

But it was no fluke. Smith’s overall basketball skills are impressive, as is his confidence and court awareness. To say he has a big future ahead of him is likely an understatement.

“We brought him up because we were comfortable that he was ready to play varsity basketball and we strongly felt that he could help make the varsity team better,” TMB Coach Rick Haberman said. “We told him that varsity would be a faster pace but that he didn’t need to do anything differently. Be yourself and play as hard as you can, but don’t change your game now because you are on varsity. Do what you do.”

Smith’s passion for basketball started at an early age, following in the footsteps of his older brother, Spencer. In February 2017, Spencer Smith became TMB’s all-time leading scorer with 1,788 points.

“It was a sight to see,” Trevor Smith said of his brother’s accomplishment. “It’s something I’ll never forget. It was really something to see how he managed to get that far.”

The Panthers just missed a trip to the state tournament in 2016, when Spencer Smith was a junior. The team was defeated 66-62 by Jackson County Central, finishing the season with a 25-4 record. His teammate, Josh Kirk, broke the record that year, scoring a career total of 1,699 points.

“It was neat to see Josh and Spencer break the scoring records, but basketball is such a team game, and for a team to be successful, so many guys have to contribute in so many ways,” Haberman said. “Many of those contributions go largely unnoticed but are just as important as the points scored.”



**Trevor Smith dribbles around Canby's Trevor Gray during TMB's game on Friday in Tracy. Photos by Jenny Kirk**



**Trevor Smith shoots from downtown recently against the Dawson-Boyd Blackjacks.**

Trevor Smith recalls watching all of those players compete together for many years.

“I remember when I was little, watching (Spencer) and his teammates,” he said. “I always dreamed of playing like that.” While COVID-19 shortened this year’s basketball season, the Minnesota State High School League’s Board of Directors recently announced that they approved a post-season for the winter sports. Fourteen-year-old Smith said he’s excited to see how well the Panthers can do the rest of the season, adding that he’s willing to do everything he can to help the team succeed.

“I just want to get out and shoot hoops and keep working hard with teammates,” he said. “We need to keep working on how to run and flow together. I think we’re doing OK this year. We just have to clean up most of our turnovers. I hope we’re still playing games at the end of the season. Although we’re lucky we even got a season.”

For someone with no varsity experience — he played

## One Million Minnesotans Opt-In to Exposure Notification System COVIDaware MN

Governor Tim Walz recently announced that since the initial launch of the exposure notification system COVIDaware MN on Nov. 23, 2020, more than one million Minnesotans have opted-in to the COVIDaware MN system. The voluntary, anonymous application alerts a user if another user with whom they have had close contact during the virus’ infectious period tests positive for COVID-19.

“COVIDaware MN gives Minnesotans the power of knowing when they’ve been exposed to COVID-19, which is key to slowing the spread of this virus,” said Governor Walz. “I am glad to see that more than one million Minnesotans have taken advantage of this technology, because we know that our communities are safer when we each take steps to protect and care for one another.”

“As we continue to fight this virus and distribute vaccines to folks across the state, Minnesotans deserve access to every tool that can help protect themselves and those around them,” said Lieutenant Governor Peggy Flanagan. “We encourage all Minnesotans to take advantage of this free and anonymous technology. The more people use COVIDaware MN, the better we can inform our community about potential exposures and keep each other safe.”

“COVIDaware MN depends on a simple yet impactful premise, and this adoption milestone is an example of the vital role that technology and innovation play in effective crisis response,” said MNIT Commissioner Tarek Tomes. “As more of us are willing to enable the exposure notification system, use it to report positive test results, and follow health recommendations when notified of an exposure, along with social distancing and wearing masks, we can

make significant progress towards slowing the spread of COVID-19.”

As of Jan. 31, 2021, there are more than 1,009,000 users of COVIDaware MN, which is about 18% of all Minnesotans. The expansion of COVIDaware MN to iPhones on January 10 aided the state’s efforts in encouraging Minnesotans to use the exposure notification system. The State continues to encourage Minnesotans to add their phone to the fight and to use COVIDaware MN to report a positive COVID-19 test result. When Minnesotans receive a positive test result, they will also get a verification code from state or local public health authorities that can be voluntarily submitted in COVIDaware MN. Minnesotans can get a verification code in two ways:

- After you receive a positive test result for COVID-19, you may be contacted by public health authorities, and you can ask them for a verification code for COVIDaware MN.

- If you haven’t yet been contacted by public health, call the Minnesota Department of Health at 651-201-5689, Mon.-Fri. 9 a.m. to 7 p.m.; Sat.-Sun. 10 a.m. to 8 p.m. Ask for a positive test verification code for COVIDaware MN.

When Minnesotans voluntarily choose to enter a verification code, they are anonymously notifying others of a possible exposure. If others get an exposure notification, they can then self-isolate and/or choose to be tested. Knowing about possible exposure early helps prevent other potential exposures, and that will help to slow the spread of the virus.

C-squad and one half of B-squad last year and started off playing B-squad this year — Smith is settling nicely into his new role.

“My mentality is if it’s an open shot and I’m feeling it, if a teammate gives me a pass, I try to knock it down,” Smith said. “Or I can wait a little bit, pass it around and wait for a good shot.”

Smith, the son of Bryan and Deb Smith, will have the opportunity to learn a lot from the upperclassmen on the team. The talented Panther varsity squad includes three seniors — Nathan Fultz, Touger Vang and Dustin VanDam — and eight juniors — Tony Nelson, Christian Wendland, Jake Turner, Matt Munson, Nick Schmitt, Noah Swenhaugen, Nick Ankrum and Joseph Anderson — most of which play key roles in every game.

“It’s awesome to have the opportunity to play up with them,” Trevor said. “It should also be a fun season next year with that good senior group.”

TMB is currently 5-2 overall. And with another weapon in the sharpshooting Smith, the Panthers look to be even more competitive.

As far as individual goals, Smith has a lot of years ahead of him to try and accomplish whatever he chooses to.

“My hope for Trevor is that he enjoys his high school career in all of his sports,” Haberman said. “And that people let him enjoy it and not pester him at every turn about numbers and statistics.”

Of course, it doesn’t hurt to dream big.

“I hope someday I can get that far (on the all-time leading scorer list),” Smith said. “We’ll see what time tells.”



# Boys 1,000 Point scorers

NAME	YEAR	POINTS	SCHOOL
Spencer Smith	2017	1,788	Tracy-Milroy-Balaton
Josh Kirk	2016	1,699	Tracy-Milroy-Balaton
Brad Wendland	1984	1,388	Balaton
Ryan Luft	1994	1,365	Tracy-Milroy
Carlton Johnson	1966	1,294	Balaton
Nick Leonard	1991	1,170	Tracy-Milroy
Dominic Dolan	2011	1,129	Tracy-Milroy-Balaton
Dan Kirk	1982	1,056	Balaton
Lee Brandt	1958	1,036	Milroy
Neil Dolan	1982	1,005	Milroy
Brendan Rokke	1999	1,000	Tracy-Milroy