

# SAUK PRAIRIE **Star**

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## Class of 2016 graduation

### *Sauk Prairie High School graduates begin new journey*

by ERIN VANDER WEELE  
Editor

It was an evening to remember for the Sauk Prairie High School Class of 2016 graduates on Friday, June 3.

The school athletic field filled with family, friends and staff for the commencement ceremony to support the graduates and celebrate their accomplishments. Superintendent Cliff Thompson opened the ceremony by welcoming the 52nd graduating class of Sauk Prairie High School.

"On behalf of the 423 employees that serve our district,

we wish all of you the very best in your future endeavors," Thompson said. "As you climb mountains to greatness, don't forget to extend your hand to help others to climb and experience greatness with you."

Before the 213 graduates walked the stage to receive their diplomas, they heard several moving speeches offering advice and words of encouragement.

In her speech, Salutatorian Sarah Peterson advised her fellow classmates to never give up on their dreams.

"Whether you plan on attending college, going straight into

the workforce, or have other plans for the journey ahead of you, I encourage you to be a dreamer," she said. "Don't let the approaching obstacles steer you out of the path to success."

Valedictorian Samuel Peetz spoke about how every individual is unique and encouraged graduates to live life for themselves.

"In a world that is constantly pushing us to be the same, being yourself is the best version of you," he said. "Life is too short to live it otherwise."

John Dollar, a 2006 graduate of Sauk Prairie High School, was the guest speaker for the

ceremony. He told graduates to not be afraid to fail and to take healthy risks.

"Your failures are and always will be more important than your successes," Dollar said.

After graduates moved their tassels from right to left, principal Chad Harnisch presented and congratulated the Sauk Prairie High School Class of 2016. The smiling graduates threw their caps in the air with joy and excitement in celebration of reaching a memorable milestone in their lives as they look forward to the bright future ahead.



Scenes from the 2016 Sauk Prairie High School graduation on June 3 show graduates celebrating their special day. More photos from the ceremony can be found inside this edition of the *Star*.

PHOTOS BY ERIN VANDER WEELE



## Governor Walker honors Project SEARCH interns

by ERIN VANDER WEELE  
Editor

Governor Scott Walker visited Sauk Prairie Healthcare on June 7 to congratulate six graduates of Project SEARCH, an internship program combining on-the-job training with classroom instruction to students with disabilities as they prepare to enter the workforce.

The six graduates are Paul Bianco, Ray Brereton, Liz Custer, Andrew Peterson, Jacob Rops and Joe Scales. Each graduate has found employment with completion of Project SEARCH. During the graduation, students gave a presentation to share their experience in the program and what they have learned.

Rops said he has become better at making a resume and learned to set greater goals for himself.

"Project SEARCH has changed me by making me aware of the different skills and tasks that I can do," Rops said. "It has also made me more aware of my strengths and weaknesses."

Peterson said he learned problem solving and has improved his social skills.

"I think Project SEARCH is a great program," he said.

In 2014, Governor Walker signed legislation that committed \$35.4 million in additional funding to the Wisconsin Fast Forward (WFF) worker training program as part of the Blueprint

— SEE SEARCH, PAGE 10



Governor Scott Walker shakes the hand of Project SEARCH graduate Joe Scales during the program completion ceremony on June 7 at Sauk Prairie Healthcare.

PHOTO BY ERIN VANDER WEELE

# SEARCH

FROM PAGE 1

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for Prosperity Initiative. This funding included \$850,000 budgeted toward expanding Project SEARCH across the state of Wisconsin, with the goal of bringing a total of 27 workforce development sites online over three years. In the eight years the program has been in the state, 457 interns have graduated from the Project SEARCH.

"Programs like Project SEARCH help give people the

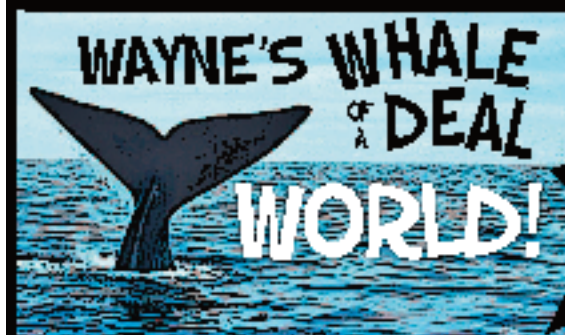
dignity that comes from work and you're going to have the opportunity to take what you've learned, the confidence that you've gained and apply that to the next step," Walker said to the graduates.

The Sauk Prairie, Reedsburg, Baraboo, and Lodi School Districts partner with Sauk Prairie Healthcare on the Project SEARCH program. Leaders of the program include Sauk

Prairie School District transition coordinator Liz Kennedy and Project SEARCH Instructor Patti Brandt.

"Project SEARCH remains committed to ensuring everyone who wants to work in the state of Wisconsin has the opportunity to do so," Governor Walker said in a press release. "This public-private partnership is an essential tool in advancing Wisconsin's economy and sponsors

like Sauk Prairie Hospital play a key role in this effort by empowering and supporting youth with disabilities who are seeking to join the workforce." Department of Health Services (DHS) Secretary Kitty Rhoades and Department of Workforce Development (DWD) Secretary Ray Allen also attended the Project SEARCH completion ceremony to honor the graduates.



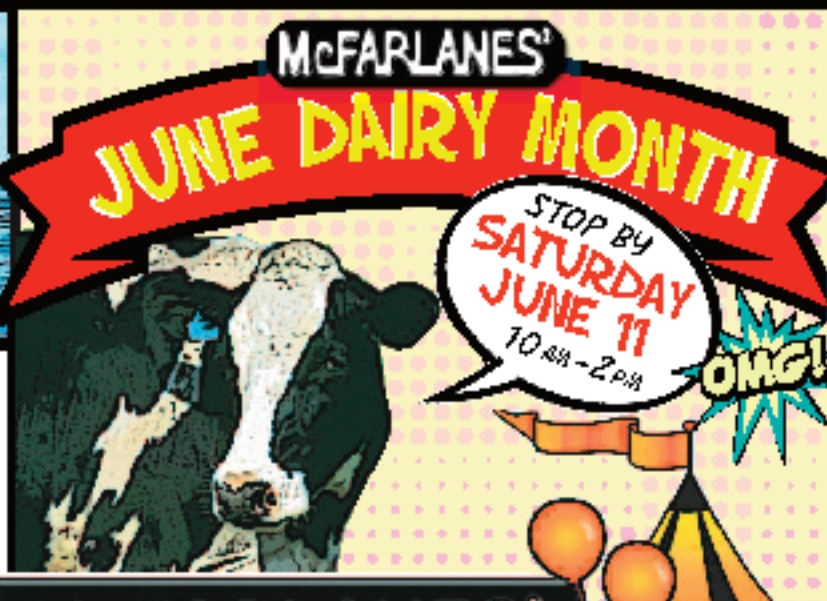
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# Scenes from Sauk Prairie High School 2016 graduation ceremony



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Sauk Prairie High School graduates were all smiles as they accepted their diplomas during the 2016 graduation ceremony on June 3 at the school. It was an evening of celebration while honoring accomplishments as the graduates enter a new chapter in their lives.