

UNION COUNTY **CEO**®

# 2022-2023 Annual Report

[unioncountyceo.org](http://unioncountyceo.org)





# OUR MISSION

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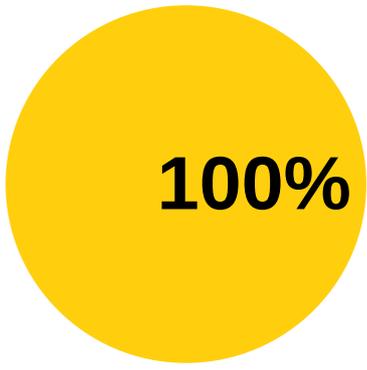
The mission of Union County CEO is to provide a comprehensive educational experience by offering real world information and skill development activities so that our students will become leaders and entrepreneurial thinkers who contribute to the economic development and sustainability of our community.

# WHAT IS CEO?

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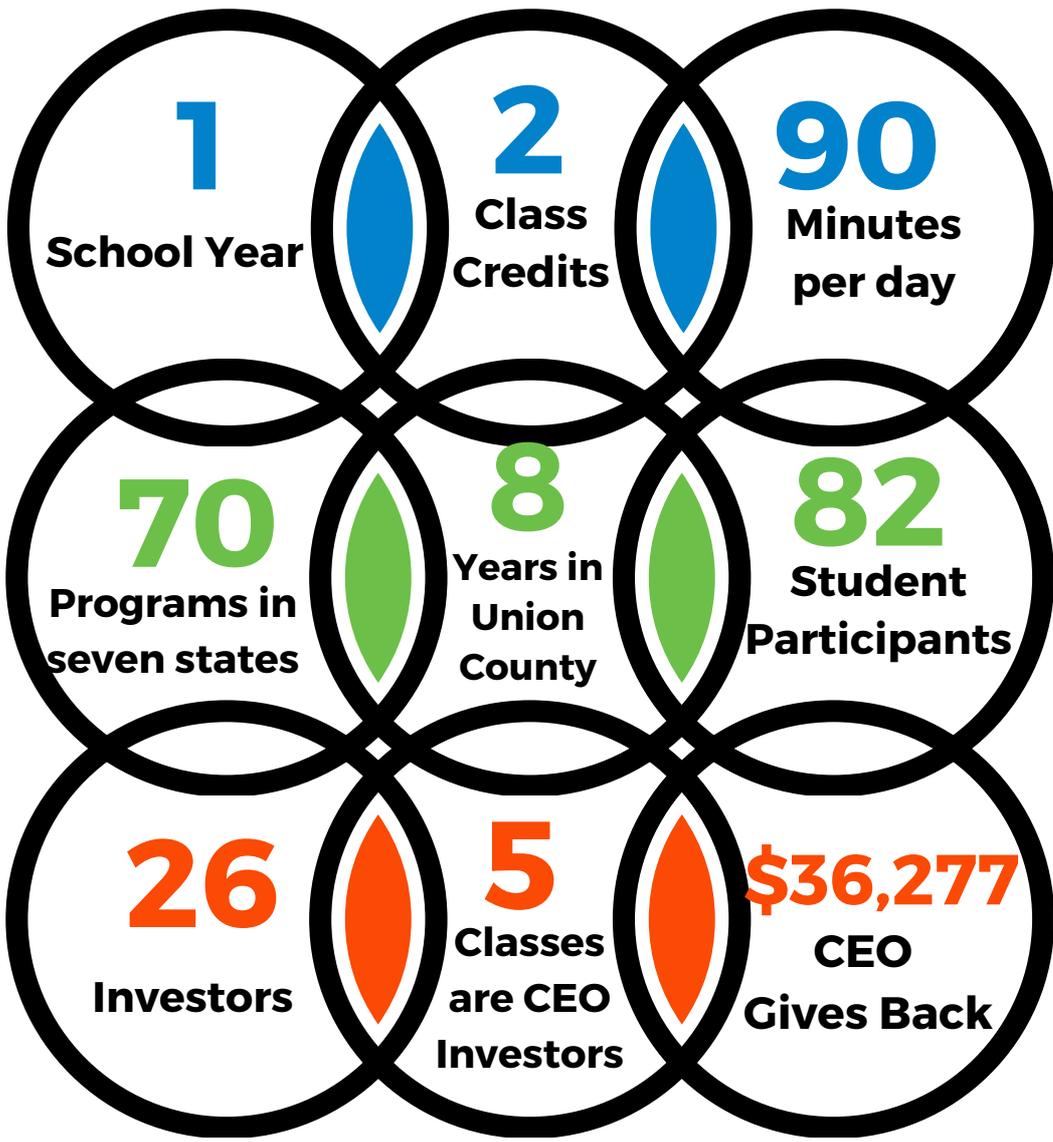
Creating Entrepreneurial Opportunities (CEO) is an economic development program transforming Union County by growing our own next generation of leaders who appreciate the area and what it has to offer. Students participate in this unique learning experience for one school year. They visit area businesses, create and implement a class business, and develop business plans to start and operate their own small business as part of the CEO curriculum.

CEO is fully funded by individuals, organizations, and business investors. These investments allow the program to prepare the next generation of leaders to make a positive impact in their community, workplace, and area of expertise.



**100% Investor Funded**

## KEY PROGRAM STATS



# A NOTE FROM OUR FACILITATOR

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Another amazing year for the Union County CEO Program has come to a close; and again, it is bittersweet.

Remembering the beginning of the year and meeting the team for the first time through finishing the special year end activities and sending them off into the next chapter of their lives fills me with joy, pride and a little sadness. I am sad that our time together has ended, but have such joy and pride that they have each successfully completed this year and are moving forward better prepared with the tools they have attained through this program.

This experience would not be possible without the support of our UCCEO Friends and Family which includes Investors, Board Members, Mentors, School Personnel, Home Bases, Community and Business Members, Parents, Grandparents, and more. This Report shares so many of our experiences and attempts to recognize and acknowledge all of the people, businesses and organizations that support us along the way. The list of supporters steadily grows as does our appreciation for all of their contributions.

It is an honor for me to be the facilitator for this program. Working with the students, meeting and talking with the business community, the investors, parents and the rest of the many people in our CEO community, is a privilege I will always appreciate and treasure. Thank you for your continued support of our UCCEO program.



**Melanie Smith, Program Facilitator**

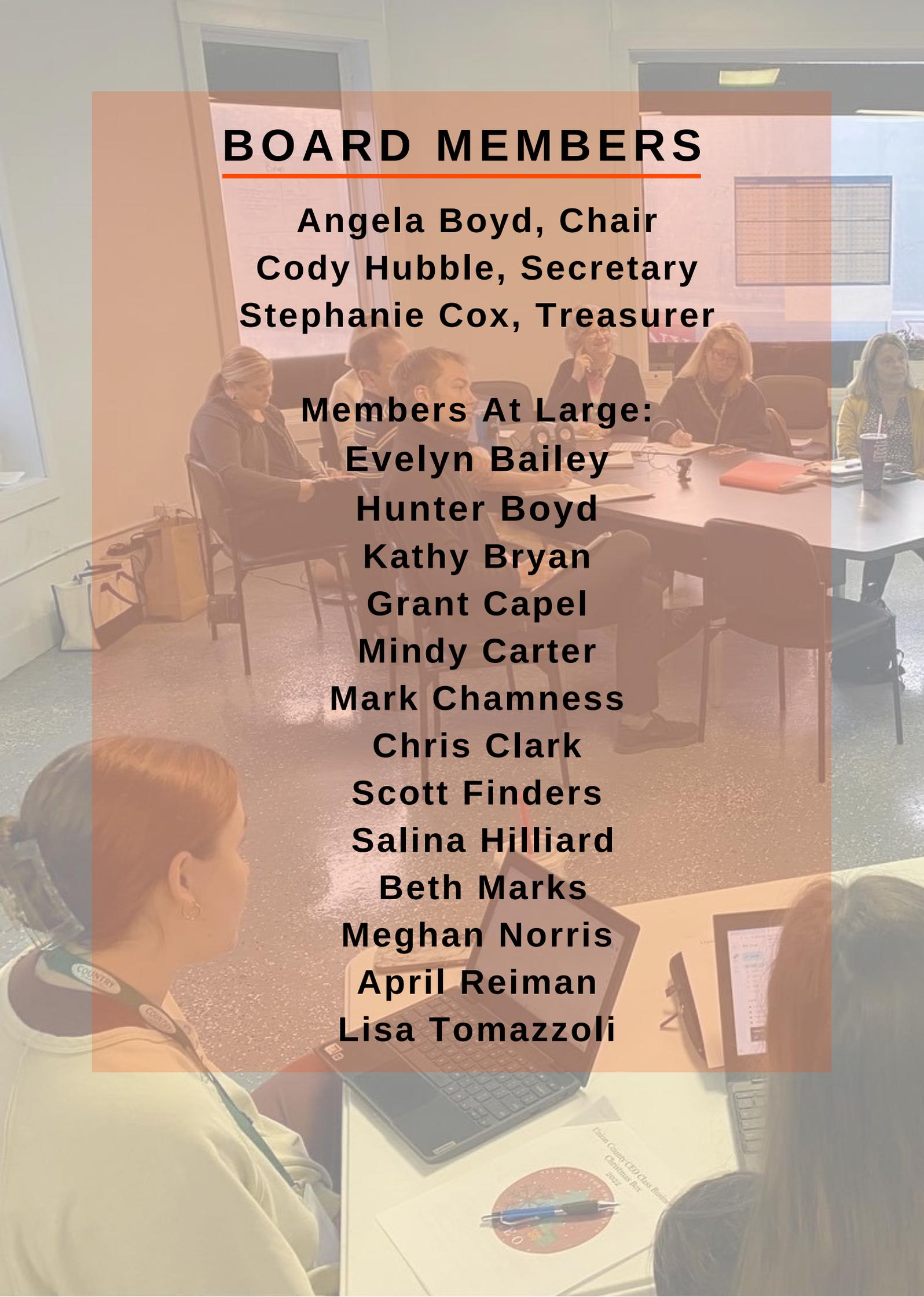
# **BOARD MEMBERS**

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**Angela Boyd, Chair  
Cody Hubble, Secretary  
Stephanie Cox, Treasurer**

## **Members At Large:**

**Evelyn Bailey  
Hunter Boyd  
Kathy Bryan  
Grant Capel  
Mindy Carter  
Mark Chamness  
Chris Clark  
Scott Finders  
Salina Hilliard  
Beth Marks  
Meghan Norris  
April Reiman  
Lisa Tomazzoli**



# INVESTORS

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We are extremely grateful for the generous support of our Investors. Investors make a minimum 3-year financial commitment. Their support allows the mission and tradition of the CEO Program to continue in Union County. Thank you for the impact your support has on our students.

**AJ Water Commission**  
**Anna-Jonesboro National Bank**  
**Anna Hospital Corporation**  
**Anna State Bank**  
**CEO Class of 2020**  
**CEO Class of 2021**  
**CEO Class of 2022**  
**City of Anna**  
**Cobden Civic Industrial Foundation**  
**Country Financial**  
**ET Simonds Construction**  
**Edward Jones**  
**Grassy Lake Hunting Club**  
**Mike and Kathy Stegle**  
**Moreland Eyecare**  
**Penninger Asphalt Paving, Inc.**  
**Rusty's Home Center**  
**SIU Credit Union**  
**Southern Illinois Healthcare**  
**The Bailey Family**  
**Union County Women in Business**  
**Union County Government**  
**Union County Chamber & Economic Development**  
**Whitney Accounting**

# FRIENDS

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Friends of CEO show support with donations of resources or financial support to provide our students with invaluable opportunities.

Thank you for supporting Union County CEO!

**Bruce Bell**

**Brad Sherrill, Attorney at Law**

**Elaine Crain**

**Davie School Inn, The Woodrums**

**Dyno Nobel**

**Gerhardt T. Schaefer**

**KiKi's Coffeehouse and Cafe**

**Midyette Bigler**

**Julia Hall, PBJ Photography**

**P.A.S.T. Organization**

**Reppert's Office Furniture, Jerry Reppert**

**Rural Health**

**Schaefer Excavating, Colton & Alyssa Penrod**

**Schaefer Enterprises**

**Sharon Schaefer Trust**

**The Barn Event Center, Carl Dillow**

**The Gazette Democrat, Geof Skinner**

**WIBH, Moury Bass**



# HOMEBASE

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Our homebase partners provide space for team meetings. These locations become our meeting space on days we have guest speakers, work on the class business or projects and host fun team building activities.

**Thank you  
for the  
hospitality!**

**Anna Fire and  
Rescue Department  
First Presbyterian  
Church of Cobden  
Grassy Lake  
Hunting Club  
Harvest Church  
Schaefer Excavating  
Shawnee College,  
Anna Extension  
Center  
Union County Farm  
Bureau**

# BUSINESS VISITS & SPEAKERS

AJ National Bank, Cletus Bierman  
AJ National Bank, Kati Denny  
AJ National Bank, Melanie Lasley  
AJ National Bank, Sarah Hennessy  
AJ National Bank, Stephanie Cox  
Angela Boyd, UCCEO Board Chair  
Anna Farmers Market  
Anna Fire Department, Jessica Roberts  
Anna Jonesboro Water Commission,  
Casey Johnson  
Anna Oasis Shrine Club, Richard  
Cunningham  
Anna Police Department, Bryan  
Watkins  
Anna Quarry, Will Pyatt  
Anna State Bank, David Carter  
Anna State Bank, Greg George  
Anna State Bank, Jon Vicenzi  
Annabelle Market, Crystal Housman  
Army National Guard, SSG Steven  
Wiseman  
Bald Knob Cross, Jena Guined  
Bill & Evelyn Bailey  
Bison Bluff Farms, Margaret Howell  
CEO Alum, Hunter Boyd  
CEO Alum, Julia Hall  
CEO Alum, Lexie Lingle  
CEO Alum, Olivia Capel  
CEO Alum, OnBrand Marketing,  
Samantha Smith  
Chris Egelston Entertainment, Chris  
Egelston  
City of Anna, Dori Bigler  
City of Anna, Gary Dahmer  
Country Financial, Charlotte Clover  
Country Financial, Mike Meisenheimer  
Country Financial, Travis Holtkamp  
Crain Funeral Home, Bryan & Stacey  
Crain  
Curt's Classics, Curtis Walker  
Davie School Inn, Lyle & Tammy  
Woodrum  
Davis Pastry, Brooke O'Reilly  
Doc's Lakeside Cabin, Tanya Loveless  
Douglas Hileman, Retired Farm  
Management Specialist, U of I Affiliated  
Elevated Ag, LLC, Brock Buckner  
ET Simonds, Beck Simonds  
First Mid Bank & Trust, Jennifer Wendt  
Flamm Orchards, Jeff, Austin & Parker  
Flamm  
Grassy Lake Hunting Club, Collin Cain  
Heartland Lumber Company, Noah  
Prater  
H&R Block, Mary Kay Miller  
Kent Probst, Retired Effingham CEO  
Facilitator & Retired Midland Institute  
Program Developer  
Kiki's Coffee House, Kathy Bryan &  
Steve Hornbeak  
Lambdin Farms, Randy & Eric Lambdin  
Meisenheimer Stables, Lance & Mike  
Meisenheimer  
Mindy Carter, UCCEO Board Member  
Novo Nordisk, Matt Lasley  
Novo Nordisk, Nathan Hodges,  
Parrish & Lambdin, Leni Lambdin  
Peachbarn Winery & Cafe, Scott &  
Jenny Schroeder  
Penninger Asphalt, Mike & Amy  
Penninger  
Quadstate Insurance, Danielle Stevens  
Rendleman Orchards, Wayne &  
Michelle Sirles  
Rise Performance 618, Dawson  
Montfort  
Rise Performance 618, Noah Prater  
Robinson Fresh, Clay Mitchell  
Robinson Fresh, Keegan Squires  
Rusty's Home Center, Rusty Flamm  
Schaefer Excavating, Colton Penrod  
SIH Medical Group, Woody Thorne  
SIH Medical Group, Tracy Hawk  
SIH Medical Group, Matt Miller  
SIU Credit Union, Kim Babbington  
SIU School of Business, Rachel Richey  
SIU Student Investment Group  
SIU SBDC, Michael Jessup  
Shawnee Bluffs Canopy Tour, Mark &  
Candy Miller  
Southernmost Tourism, Carol Hoffman  
State Farm, Bill Ecker  
The Strike Zone, Noah Prater  
The Villa-Pizza Villa, Josh Stegle  
The Nimmo Company, John Nimmo  
TMG Company, Joni Barwick  
U of I Extension, Susan Odum  
Union County Chamber of Commerce  
Union County Circuit Clerk, Keri Clark  
Union County Clerk, Lance  
Meisenheimer  
Union County Fair, Mike & Marilyn  
Meisenheimer  
Union County Farm Bureau, Stephanie  
Rhodes  
Union County Hospital, Harry Brockus  
Union County Women in Business  
Whitney Accounting, Mark Chamness  
WIBH, Moury Bass

Drake Campbell is a 2023 graduate from Cobden High School. He currently works part time at Buckle in Carbondale and is working full time for his business, Mallard LawnCare Co.

After high school, Drake plans to study at Shawnee Community College and get an associates degree in Ag Business. Drake plans on continuing his CEO business, Mallard LawnCare Co.. Once Drake turns 21, he will begin his training for the Illinois State Police. Drake would like to say, "Don't forget to check out Mallard LawnCare Co. on Facebook and Instagram."

"During my CEO experience, I have learned many different skills and had so many wonderful opportunities. My social skills have taken a huge jump from what they were at the beginning of the year. We have visited many places, but I would have to say my favorite was Heartland Lumber with Mr. Noah Prater. I am so excited to see how my personal business will flourish."



*Drake  
Campbell*



Oregon Dover graduated with the Senior Class of 2023 from Anna-Jonesboro Community High School. She was the Vice President of Student Council, the secretary for YAC, a member of NHS, a member of Beta Club and Spanish Club. Oregon participated in volleyball, wrestling, and soccer. In her free time, Oregon loves spending time with family, playing sports with her friends, and driving on backroads with her siblings!

Oregon is the owner of Safety Sitter First, a business with house sitting and pet sitting services. After high school, Oregon plans to attend John A. Logan to pursue a career in Construction Management.

"One thing that CEO has taught me is that how hard you work to complete the things you do is a reflection of your overall character. I've learned to work with my classmates, how to speak with professionalism, and how the business world works. I find myself constantly talking things out with my family in a business mentality. Not only does this shock them, but I'm also shocked by how my mind has shifted into thinking about everyday problems with my CEO experiences!

One of my favorite visits we have done this semester was Rendleman Orchards. Mrs. Michelle Sirles taught us that you are your business. If you ever go to Rendlemans you can see how personalized it is! There are several decorations used from generations of family members and they are always catering to the needs of their customers. One thing I've heard on repeat from almost every person we have visited is, 'Once you make a goal and reach it, then you make another goal.' "



*Oregon  
Dover*



Jaden Ebberts is a 2023 graduate of Anna-Jonesboro Community High School. While a student there, she was a member of Beta Club, FCCLA, as well as Vice President of FBLA. She was also a bowler on the AJ bowling team and one of the Drum Majors for the Marching Wildcats.

Jaden is also the proud owner of Rip Stitches, a business offering hand made blankets, heating pads and more. She plans to continue her education as well as her bowling career at SIC in Harrisburg. She then plans to transfer to SIU to pursue a career in Physical Therapy.

"At the beginning of CEO I was worried that I would not make connections with the people in my class, I was completely wrong. I am so grateful for this class; I have built great bonds with them as well with the adults. My favorite visit thus far was one of our first visits, at Mrs. Evelyn Bailey's house. She prepared breakfast for us as well as told us stories about her life and experiences. I think what made that visit special was it was on my birthday. Mrs. Evelyn is one of the best ladies that you will meet in this program. She teaches a lot about manners and etiquette and this helped me personally. I am so thankful for this opportunity!"



*Jaden Ebberts*

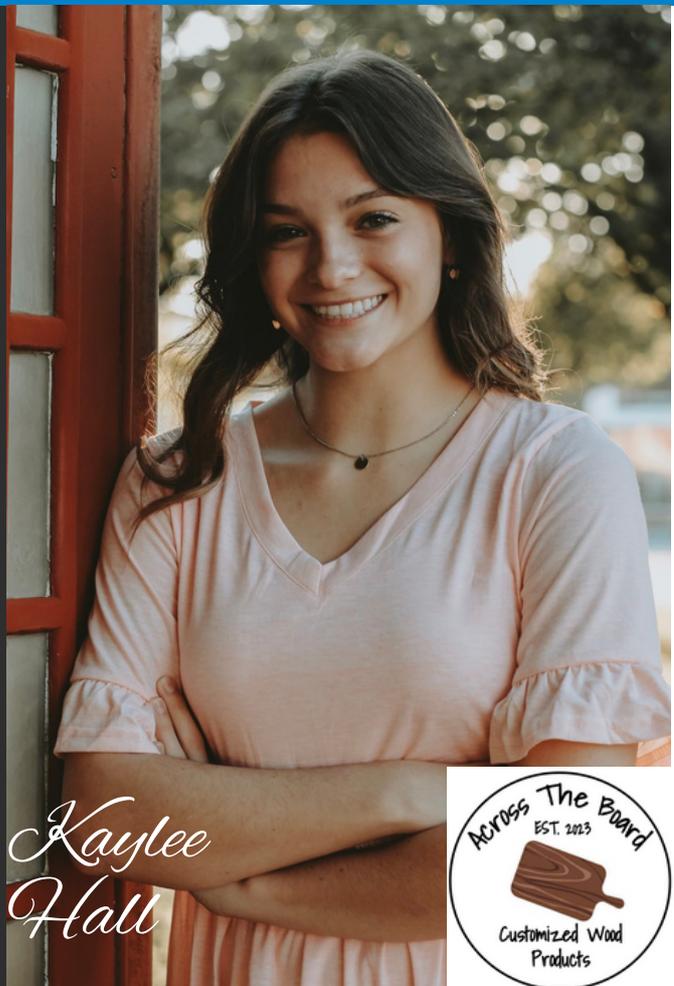


Kaylee Hall completed her Junior year at Cobden High School and will be a member of the Senior Class of 2024. Kaylee participates in CYCA, Beta Club, School Democracy Team, (WISE) Math Team, Math Team, Student Council, volleyball, soccer, and cheerleading. She has always had a passion for achieving great things! She loves being able to spend time with her family and friends while working toward her goals.

After High School Kaylee plans to attend college and go to PA school or become a pediatrician. She would like to stay close to home and be involved in her community when she comes back. Her individual business "Across The Board - Customized Wood Products" has been such a success for her! She is able to engrave any wood product with any design by using a laser. She hopes to get her products in wineries and other local stores.

"CEO has taught me more than what I could have ever imagined. The program is so eye-opening! There isn't a day that I regret being a part of this program. The CEO team is more than just my peers, they are all like my second family. We have all become so close together, and I am truly so thankful for that!"

"This program lets us meet phenomenal business owners in Union County. Although I absolutely love business visits, my favorite event we have gone to so far is the Legislative Luncheon. I was so beyond scared to talk to everybody there, but in the end, it has helped me be able to talk more comfortably. It was a very impressive and memorable event. I will forever and always remember the great memories and laughs I have made in this class!"



*Kaylee Hall*



Lia Mays was in the graduating class of 2023 at Anna-Jonesboro Community High School. Lia was in many clubs, including Student Council, Beta Club, Mu Alpha Theta, Educators Rising, Spanish Club, WSAC, YAC, and cheered throughout her 4 years of high school.

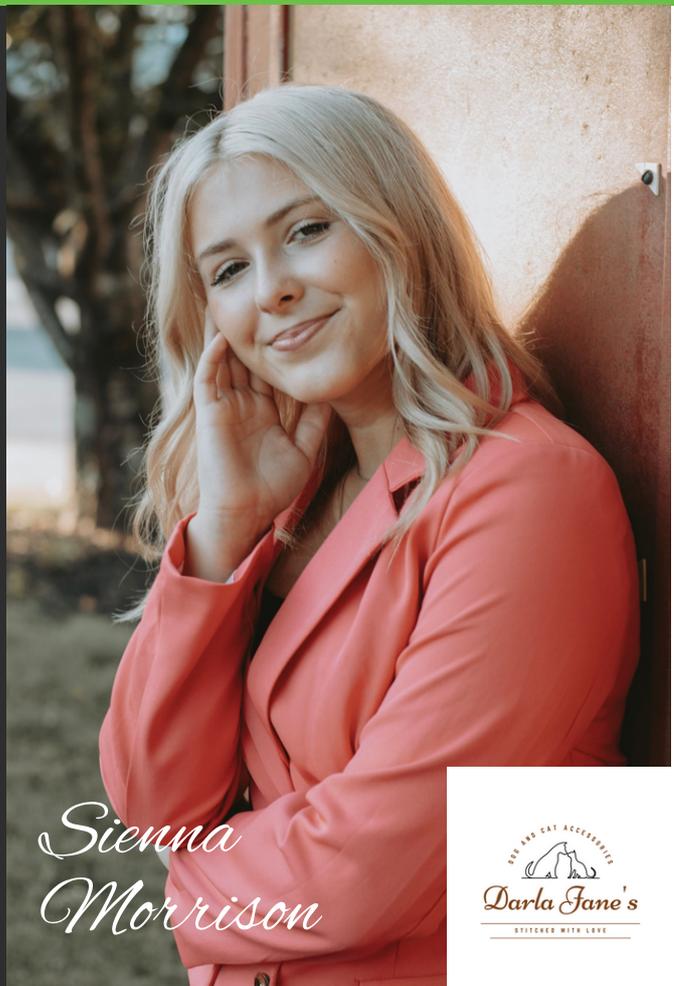
Lia's individual business is Bodhi Scent Co., where she makes many different fragrances, and distributes them through candles, wax melts, essential oil diffuser drops, and incense sticks. Lia plans to pursue a bachelors in Elementary Ed at SEMO, and is also planning on getting her Radiology Technician Certification following her graduation.

"CEO has not only brought me a multitude of opportunities, but also a lot of long-lasting friendships and mentors that I have relied on and will continue to throughout my journey. One of my favorite visits would have to be Michelle Sirles from Rendleman Orchards. Not only was it my birthday, and not only did she supply us with treats and shirts to welcome us, but she had very valuable information on marketing and business and I've kept it in my pocket since we've been there."



Sienna is a 2023 graduate of Anna-Jonesboro Community High School. After high school, she plans on attending Southern Illinois University in Carbondale to further her education and obtain a Bachelor's Degree in Accounting. Throughout the CEO Program, Sienna launched her personal business, Darla Jane's Bandanas. Darla Jane's Bandanas is a dog and cat bandana business. In high school, Sienna was a member of many clubs. She was the Treasurer of Student Council and Beta Club, and the Vice President of the Youth Advisory Committee. She was also a member of Mu Alpha Theta, Math Team, Spanish Club, FBLA, and National Honor Society. Currently, Sienna works as a hairstylist assistant at Salon 109 for Darci Morrison. She loves to read, do puzzles, hike, and go on adventures anywhere. She also loves to travel.

"I am very grateful for getting the opportunity to be a part of the Union County CEO 22-23 Team! So far, I have learned to be more confident in my public speaking skills. I have also learned how to be more professional. I love going on the visits because they teach me so much! My favorite visit so far is our visit to Flamm Orchards in Cobden, Illinois. I am also extremely grateful for all the support I have received by being a part of the 2022-2023 CEO Class."



Reese Reynolds, is a 2023 graduate of Anna-Jonesboro Community High School! She was a proud member of Beta Club, Mu Alpha Theta, Math Team, Girls Golf Team, as well as the Secretary for Student Council. If she was not participating in a club activity, she was working hard at the local Dairy Queen!

Reese is the proud owner and operator of Buttered With Love! Next year, she will attend Shawnee Community College to finish her Associate of Science. After she graduates with her Associates, she is planning on attending a university in Florida or New Mexico to complete a degree in Psychology. Her dream job is to be an educational psychologist, helping the kids with tough lives who need help but are too scared to ask. She loves helping people, and the UCCEO experience elevated that passion!

"The CEO Program has made me grow so much as a person, and I know will make me grow even more. This amazing program has taught me life lessons and skills on top of the business aspect. This program isn't just for business-interested students, but for anybody who could use more experience in the real world! I love the new family that I received, and the endless opportunities given by the program and our endless networking! Mrs. Susan Odum has the greatest game to show how important staying local is, and I think every school in our county should play it at least once. A community dies when the small businesses do, and this program is here to make sure that doesn't happen!"



*Reese  
Reynolds*



Marissa Simmons is a 2023 graduate for Anna-Jonesboro Community High School. Through CEO, she has created her business, Maraki Macrame. Maraki Macrame offers a variety of different products that Marissa hand ties to suit your desired style. CEO has allowed Marissa to develop a passion in social media marketing, which she plans to pursue in the future. Marissa will be attending Southeast Missouri State University in the fall of 2023 to get her Bachelor's degree in Digital and Integrated Marketing Communications.

"The CEO program has been the best position that I have ever placed myself in. CEO allowed me to find and pursue a new passion for social media marketing. It helped me pave my future path and actually become excited about graduation. CEO has helped me branch out, meet new people, and build the confidence needed to speak in front of others. I honestly feel that the CEO program has enhanced my abilities and allowed me to be set apart from my peers, and that would have never been possible without this incredible opportunity."



*Marissa  
Simmons*



Abigail Smith is a 2023 graduate of Shawnee Jr./Sr. High School. In school, she was involved in many extracurriculars such as Student Government, Beta club, Science Club, Scholar Bowl, BC2M, SIFTC, 4H, Volleyball, and Softball. She was also the vice president of her senior class.

After high school, she is attending the University of Kentucky and majoring in Political Science. Her current plan is to then become a lobbyist. Abigail is also the owner of Sensitive to Nature Soap Co.

"The Union County CEO Program is a once in a lifetime opportunity. It has taught me so many life skills such as accountability, responsibility, and professionalism. It has also given me so many resources and friendships that I would have never had without this program. In one short year, this class has put me on the right track and has set me up for success. I'm so grateful for my CEO family."



*Abigail  
Smith*

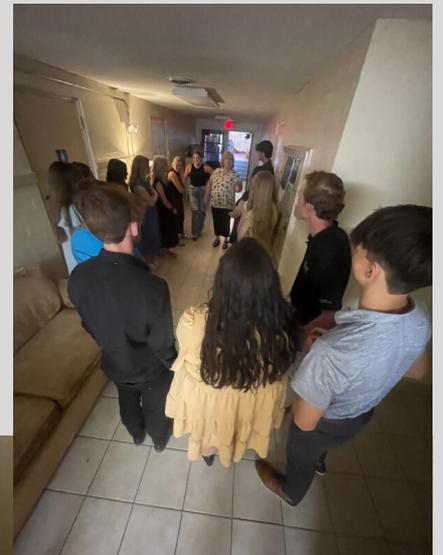


# ORIENTATION

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UCCEO orientation, just like new employee orientation at a business, provides the new students with concise and accurate information to be successful in the CEO Program.

**Thank you to Davie School Inn for the use of their facility.**



# Micro Business

The CEO Class microbusiness allows team members the opportunity to begin their relationships with the business community within the first few weeks of class. The microbusiness helps earn seed money for the class business and cover the cost of professional logo apparel. **We would like to thank the following businesses for supporting the 2022-2023 Microbusiness: AJ National Bank, City of Anna, Flamm Orchards, Rendleman Orchards, Schaefer Excavating, and Union County Hospital.**





*"A mentor is not someone who walks ahead of you to show you how they did it. A mentor walks alongside you to show you what you can do" ~Anonymous*

## **MENTORS**

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**Jeanne Brumleve  
Keri Clark  
Doug Hileman  
Stephany Hoehner  
Casey Johnson**

**Dawson Monfort  
Betsy Oxford  
Amy Penninger  
Samantha Smith**

# Class Business

"All I Want for Christmas is... to support local businesses" was the theme of this year's CEO Class Business. Students selected to continue the tradition of selling local sampler Christmas Boxes with the focus of making this the best yet.

During class, students participated in a hands-on experience with Susan Odum, Community Development Specialist from the University of Illinois Extension Center. Here is how Orië Dover described this experience in her journal, "For one part of the game we each got to choose a business from Union County and represent it. One person was handed a ten-dollar bill and would then pick a random card that would either say 'Community', 'Shopping Mall', or 'Online Purchase'. If the person drew the 'Community' card, they would spend the money by giving it to a student representing one of the local businesses, but if they drew either the 'Online' or 'Shopping Mall', then the money would be lost. This was such a fun and eye-opening experience. It really made it visually clear how important it is to spend your money locally where it circulates 7 times in the community before leaving. That is 7 times it paid a salary or helped a business support a sports team, etc., and it added to local sales tax for government services and more before leaving the area. If no one supports the local businesses then they won't be able to stay open, and if they don't stay open, our community won't be able to survive."

This experience encouraged the Class of 2023 to feature local businesses that have wonderful Christmas items and other goods and services to use year-round in the Christmas Sampler Boxes. The hope was that individuals who purchased a box would find something they like and visit the local business to repurchase an item or to purchase items for gifts ultimately promoting Shop Local.

Our local sampler Christmas Box Business was a success! Thank you to everyone who donated, purchased boxes and supported our class business. Your generosity allowed The Class of 2023 to start their individual businesses and generously give back to our community at the end of the year.



# Jingle and Mingle



Jingle and Mingle is an opportunity for investors, alumni, board members, mentors, friends and the UCCEO Team to gather for a holiday social event. Guests enjoyed food prepared by Anna Baking Company, beverages from KiKi's Coffeehouse, and the beautifully decorated P.A.S.T.(Promoting Appreciation of Structural Treasures) House.

# End of Year Fieldtrip

After lots of hard work this year it was time for a business visit with some ziplining fun at Shawnee Bluffs Canopy Tours.



# ALL STAR CELEBRATION & TRADE SHOW

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The culmination of this amazing year was the All Star Celebration and Trade Show held at The Barn Event Center in Anna.

The All Star Celebration and Trade Show gives the team a chance to set up a professional booth and pitch their businesses to the attendees. They did a fabulous job with their booths and presentations. It also allows the stakeholders to celebrate the students' overall growth.

All Star CEO Alumni Awards were presented to Peyton Lingle (Class of 2022) and Drake Roach (Class of 2020). These awards are made possible thanks to the generosity and hard work of previous CEO classes who have "given back" to the CEO scholarship fund. The awards may be used for college expenses, technical training or to further entrepreneurial experiences.

The 2022-2023 Class presented their "give back" awards. They chose to make donations to Grassy Lake Hunting Club, Davie School Inn and Hadley's Haven.

Grassy Lake Hunting Club and Davie School Inn accepted awards for their annual Wounded Warrior Hunting experience for disabled veterans. Hadley's Haven accepted the award to help bring an All-Inclusive Playground to the area.

In addition, the 2022-2023 Class presented three scholarships to classmates. Marissa Simmons, Abigail Smith and Jaden Ebberts were the recipients.

The CEO Alumni awarded a current student the Alumni Pick Award. This award is a vote by alumni in attendance based on both creativity, wow factor and professionalism. Kaylee Hall was awarded the Alumni Pick award for 2023.



# Special Thanks....



To Julia Hall (CEO Alumna), of PBJ photography by julia for the professional headshots

To Alyssa and Colton Penrod for the office space at Schaefer Excavating

CEO is open to any junior or senior who lives in or attends school in Union County. Students are selected via a blind evaluation process after online application submission. If you know of a potential candidate, have them talk with their school counselor for more information.

To stay up to date on what is happening with Union County CEO follow us on Facebook or Instagram.

Union County CEO receives financial and other support ONLY from businesses, organizations or individuals.

