



# THE RED & WHITE

OCTOBER 2023

## A LETTER FROM THE SUPERINTENDENT

### Dear Vicksburg Community Schools Families,

I'm very proud of the way our school year has kicked off. It has been wonderful getting to know our students and seeing them shine.

We received great news in early in September that Vicksburg High School was once again named one of the top high schools in the state. U.S. News and World Report named VHS the 4th best high school in Kalamazoo County. Our excellent graduation rate and more than 40-percent of students taking AP classes helped contribute to the top ranking.

We thank all of our teachers and staff for this great honor. We know that our students are set up for success from day one at Vicksburg Community Schools. And we recognize that the support they receive in elementary and middle school helps contribute to their success in high school and beyond.

I also want to thank our community. You helped us create our biggest tailgate event ever. It was a night to celebrate our village, schools, local businesses and community partners who give so much to

our students each and every day. I also want to thank everyone who attended and came out to support the Bulldogs. Thank you for celebrating with us.

I hope you enjoy this edition of the Red & White. You'll read more about the great things happening at VCS and how our students are taking that support and generosity and passing it on to others.



**Regards,**  
**Keevin O'Neill, SUPERINTENDENT**

## Bestselling Author Headed to Vicksburg

A Michigan author is traveling to Vicksburg to talk about her book, which has been named one of TIME Magazine's top 100 young adult books of all time.

Angeline Bouley wrote *Firekeeper's Daughter*. The book has been selected as the Great Michigan Read title for the fall of 2023 and spring of 2024. The program aims to connect Michigan residents by deepening the reader's understanding of the state, society and humanity.

The book is set in Sault Ste. Marie on an Ojibwe reservation. Bouley is a member of the Sault Ste. Marie Tribe of Chippewa Indians. She will be in Vicksburg to speak about her book on Monday, October 23rd. The community event is at 6pm at the Vicksburg High School Performing Arts Center. It's, but registration is requested.

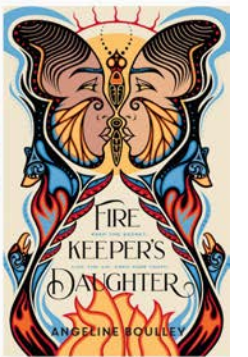
The Vicksburg District Library, in collaboration with Gilbert and Ivy and the Vicksburg Cultural Arts



Center are hosting Bouley and other Native American art and history events.

Ahead of Bouley's visit, teen and adult book clubs are forming now to share *Firekeeper's Daughter* and it will be available for free download through October 18th. For more information visit [vicksburglibrary.org/firekeeper/](http://vicksburglibrary.org/firekeeper/)

Celebrate  
**FIREKEEPER'S DAUGHTER**  
By: Angeline Bouley



### TEEN BOOK CLUBS

- 📅 WEDNESDAY, OCT 11 2:45 - 3:45 PM
- 📅 FRIDAY, OCT 13 1:00 - 2:00 PM
- 📅 WEDNESDAY, OCT. 25 2:45 - 3:45 PM

AT THE VICKSBURG DISTRICT LIBRARY  
215 S. MICHIGAN AVE, VICKSBURG 49097  
(269) 649-1648

NEWCOMERS WELCOME!

Register to Meet the author, Ms. Angeline Bouley in person! <https://tinyurl.com/ABauthorvisit>  
Monday, October 23, 6:00 p.m.,  
Vicksburg Performing Arts Center,  
501 E. Highway St., Vicksburg, MI

FREE EVENT!

E-book and audiobook downloads:

[readmichigan.biblioboard.com](http://readmichigan.biblioboard.com)  
(free unlimited downloads during these dates:  
September 20 through October 18)

#### Awards:

- A TIME Magazine 100 Best YA Book of All Time
- An American Indian Youth Literature YA Honor Book
- Instant #1 New York Times Bestseller, and many more awards!

For more information:

[www.vicksburglibrary.org/firekeeper/](http://www.vicksburglibrary.org/firekeeper/)



This project is funded in part by Michigan Humanities, an affiliate of the National Endowment for the Humanities.



# Community Tailgate Event Bigger Than Ever

Thank you to everyone who came out for the 2023 Vicksburg Community Tailgate!

Because of our sponsors and community partners it was the biggest tailgate event yet. The support you showed our students and district is incredible! Thank you to everyone who attended.

We need to give a big shoutout to our top sponsors:

## Our Bulldog Sponsors:

The Vicksburg Community Schools Foundation  
Frederick Construction  
Connections Community Church  
Denooyer Ford  
Vicksburg Family Home Care

## Our Red Sponsors:

KalBlue Group  
Veronica Tultz Realtor

L & L Driving School

## Our White Sponsors:

Ivy Rehab  
Stewart Sutherland  
ChapNaz Church  
Fab Magic  
Lakeland Reformed Church  
Gilbert and Ivy  
Trust Shield Insurance

Vicksburg Optometry

Kalamazoo State Bank  
Bulldog Lacrosse

And thank you to the dozens of other community partners and school groups who hosted booths and made this great event possible

We can't wait to see you next year!



# VHS Homecoming This Friday, October 6

You're invited!

Come out for Vicksburg High School Homecoming!

The parade steps off from the VHS east parking lot at 5pm on Friday, October 6th. Come see all the great parade entries!

Then come cheer on the Bulldogs against Sturgis. Kickoff is at 7pm.

The top student floats and the homecoming court will be introduced at halftime.

Hope to see you there!

**2023 VCS HOMECOMING PARADE ROUTE**

**Line up in the VHS east parking lot at 4pm**  
**Parade steps off at 5pm**  
 Parade starts North on Wilson  
 Turns West on Prairie  
 Turns South on Main  
 Turns East on Park  
 Goes behind the VAB & ends at the VMS parking lot

# Equestrian Team Wins Big at Districts



Congratulations to the Vicksburg High School Equestrian Team on taking the District Championship! Way to represent Vicksburg.

The equestrian team has a long tradition of excellence! We wish them well on the rest of their season.

# Volunteers Clean OEC

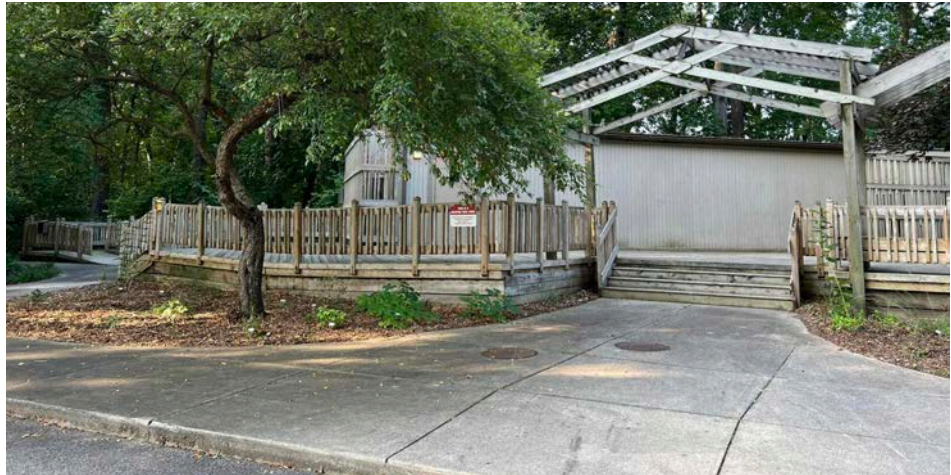
Volunteers from Connections Community Church in Schoolcraft spent time at our Outdoor Education Center at the start of the school year.

They completed multiple projects to help improve the site for our students.

The volunteers trimmed trees and shrubs, weeded gardens, weed whipped around the

buildings, replaced many deck boards, washed the post covers, trimmed up the trail and blew off the deck and trail.

It looked amazing when they were done and helped us get ready to start a new school year! Many thanks to these volunteers who gave their time to improve the OEC.



**CELEBRATING 40 YEARS!**



**Congratulations to the Vicksburg Community Schools Foundation on their 40th anniversary! The foundation has a significant impact on Vicksburg students and teachers by funding programs that would not otherwise be supported by tax revenues.**

## Gracie Breitenbach Receives Major Award

Congratulations to Vicksburg High School senior Gracie Breitenbach!

She's one of 72,000 students from across the country who earned academic honors from College Board's National Recognition Programs.

Gracie received the National African American Recognition Award from the College Board.

She earned this academic honor based on her GPA and outstanding performance on her AP exams and PSAT.

The award recognizes high-performing students and helps them stand out to colleges.

### Congratulations Gracie Breitenbach!

#### National African American Recognition Award winner from the College Board

Gracie earned this academic honor based on her GPA and outstanding performance on her AP Exams and PSAT



NATIONAL RECOGNITION PROGRAM SCHOLARS

CollegeBoard



## AIM Higher Feeds the Community

The Vicksburg High School AIM Higher service group is once again making and delivering meals to the unhoused in the Kalamazoo area. They call the effort "Food For Friends."

The group makes and serves a nutritious meal and brings personal care items as well.

September was the first meal of the new school year and the volunteers fed about 50 people at Martin Luther King Jr. Park in Kalamazoo.

Students, their families and some VCS staff members prepared a hot meal, sides, fruit, and desserts. They are hoping to do this monthly and are asking community support to continue.

The next community meal is October 16th. If you are able to help, AIM Higher would appreciate any donations of non-perishable items by Friday, October 13th. Perishable items are needed on Monday, October 16th. All items can be brought to the high school office. If you have any questions, please contact AIM High coordinator Rachel King at [rking@vicksburgschools.org](mailto:rking@vicksburgschools.org).

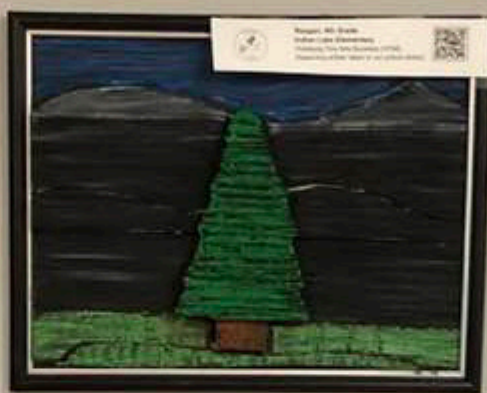


# Student Art Displayed Across Our Community

There's lots of great artwork on display all around the village.

Special thanks to the Vicksburg Fine Arts Boosters for helping show off our great elementary school art. 40 students, 30 from Indian Lake and 10 from Tobey, currently have their artwork on display until the end of November.

You can find their creations at La Finca, Jaspares, Rise N Dine, Aaron's Music Service, Daily Grind Cafe, Wooden Stitch and Erbelli's.



## Tennis Green Out Invitational

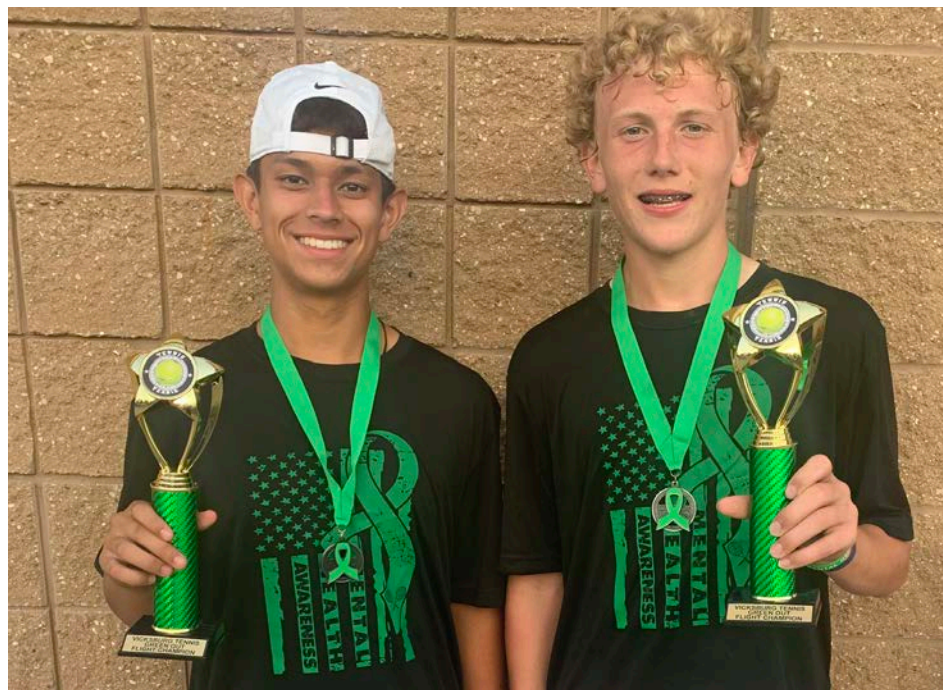
The Vicksburg High School Boys Tennis Team hosted their Green Out Invitational in support of mental health awareness.

This was the second year for the invitational with a goal of bringing awareness to mental health struggles and the support that is available for both students and community members.

Eight teams participated in the event. Spectators and players were asked to wear green to show their support, and every athlete left with a green ribbon medal to showcase that they are all supportive of each other.

Boys Tennis Coach Nick Foley said he loves bringing awareness to important issues and putting Vicksburg High School in a positive spotlight.

The VHS varsity team took second place, one point shy of first. Flight winners were: 1S: Jordan Diekman and 4S: Maddox Rosalin.



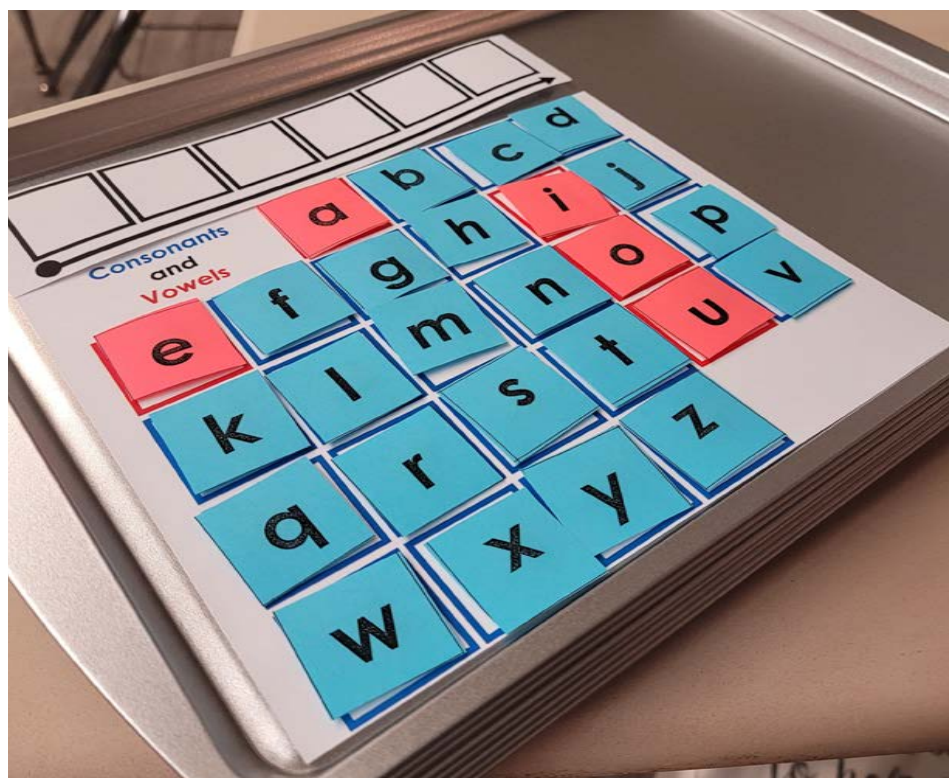
## National Honor Society Helps Others Learn

Students helping students.

A group of students from the Vicksburg High School National Honor Society volunteered after school to assemble word work mats for Kindergarten through

2nd grade small group reading instruction.

We are so grateful for these generous students who donated their time to help others learn.



# Vicksburg Middle School Explores Local History

The new Vicksburg Middle School elective class titled Minds in Motion is working on their first research project.

The class is starting by studying the history of Vicksburg. Once their local research is done, the students will then move into a research project of their own

choosing.

As part of the Vicksburg Study, the students and teacher Chris Laaksonen took walking tours

of historic places around town. Over the course of two days, they visited places with historic markers to learn about the origins of Vicksburg.



## Discovering Cave Art

Do the lessons sink in better if your teacher is in costume?!

The 7th grade history teachers at Vicksburg Middle School think so!

The students are learning about early art found in caves. They got to visit a "cave" built in the library where they found ancient art pieces inside and had to draw

hypotheses about the artists. In groups they discussed what they could learn about the artists from looking at the work they created.

The cave lesson is always a fun one that sticks with the students year after year.

