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THE RED AND WHITE

MAY/JUNE 2017

VICKSBURGCITYSCHOOLS.ORG





FROM SUPERINTENDENT CHARLES GLAES

As Michiganders, we are familiar with cycles. We are used to the change of weather, new sports seasons, and holiday traditions to “keep track” of life. The end of a school year is a season in which we like to look back and celebrate the victories and milestones that your schools have achieved. Much of this issue is devoted to that purpose. While some feel it is impolite to “toot your own horn”, others want to know the benefits of all the resources the community puts into your school system; this is one way we can do that.

The district as a whole has had many successes and accolades over the year. Vicksburg High School was recently ranked as 82nd in the state in the prestigious US News and World Report rankings and was recognized as an “Academic State Champion”, by a statewide magazine, one of only 54 in the state, while also being recognized again as an “AP Honor Roll” school, one of only 14 in the state.

Vicksburg Elementary schools are celebrating initiatives such as student leadership development, expanding the use of video and computer technology and the creation of playground areas that are accessible to all. The middle school is excited about the creation of a new “computer science for innovators” elective and school wide accelerated reader quiz scores near 90 percent. The transportation department celebrated another great year of top rate bus inspections by the state police and foodservice has applied for a grant to yet again provide for the summer of feeding children in our area around the village.

Educating young people is a group effort. The community provides the resources and the “can-do” spirit, the families provide the daily structure and support for students, the students provide the energy, skill, and will and the school system provides the vision, structure, and tools for making these things happen.

And perhaps, our biggest annual achievement is graduating a class of young people to take their place in our society and thus ensuring our future. This year we are proud to honor our 136th graduating class which will have 203 graduates from VHS and 8 graduates from Vicksburg Pathways High School.

These things did not occur in a vacuum. Educating young people is a group effort. The community provides the resources and the “can-do” spirit, the families provide the daily structure and support for students, the students provide the energy, skill, and will and the school

system provides the vision, structure, and tools for making these things happen. One way the community has helped with resources is to renew the countywide enhancement millage. That millage passed among VCS voters, as well as the county as a whole. For that you have the thanks of a grateful school system and a continued pledge to spend those dollars to maintain and improve our level of service to all.

Some people see the schools as a “black box” where you put kindergarteners in one end and you get high school graduates out the other. It is far more participatory than that. Our desire is for all of the parts of the community to understand the process and find ways to participate in it. To make education greater, we have to make “hands-on learning” in Vicksburg mean all of us joining hands in the process, wherever we can, to make it better.

I hope you enjoy the celebrations on the pages that follow.

DUCK DERBY

The Annual Vicksburg Community Schools Foundation Duck Derby will be held on June 10 during the Old Car Festival. The kids’ race will start at noon with the adult race to start at 1:00 p.m. The kids’ race is a challenge between the three elementary schools with a chance to win prizes and an ice cream party for their school. Raffle Tickets for both races are on sale now. Contact the Foundation office at 321-1006 for more information. Proceeds benefit the activities of the School Foundation.



COVER PHOTO BY SUE MOORE

THE VCS CLASS OF 2016 CELEBRATES COMMENCEMENT. UPPER RIGHT: SUPERINTENDENT CHARLES GLAES ADDRESSES GRADUATES AND COMMUNITY. LOWER LEFT: WALKER POLSINELLI RECEIVES HIS DIPLOMA FROM BOARD MEMBER WIL EMMERT.

VHS STUDENTS ARE REAPING THE REWARDS OF THEIR EFFORTS

At last we celebrate a bountiful harvest of great rewards! After years of toil and sowing, many Vicksburg High School students are reaping the rewards of their exceptional efforts. From many fields of endeavor they are recognized, and we call attention to a few of these talented individuals.

The Class of 2017 will soon cross that stage and reap the reward of thirteen years of education. Among the many outstanding students are the Top Ten Seniors who are recognized for their dedication to their education and their focus on achievement. The Co-Valedictorians are brothers Benjamin Gangloff, who will study aerospace engineering, and Jack Gangloff, who will study astronomy and astrophysics. Both will attend the University of Michigan. The Salutatorian, Savannah McDowell, will also be studying at the University of Michigan. Adding to the Top Ten is Kyla Kane-Maystead, who will be heading to Michigan Technical University and Maddie Petersen, who plans to attend U of M to study political science and business. Josephine Hosner will attend Kalamazoo College this fall and Carlie Kudary will travel south to the University of Missouri Saint Louis to study biology or psychology. Andrew Phelps is planning to attend Spring Arbor University beginning his journey to become a pediatrician, and Adam Grabowski, will study chemical engineering at Michigan State University. Rounding out the Top Ten Seniors is Raquel Rice, who will attend Western Michigan University this fall, and Jonathan Eager, who is committed to attend Michigan State University.



Senior Award Winners (left to right and bottom to top) Ben Gangloff, Andrew Phelps, Savannah McDowell, Jack Gangloff, Kristin Gustavson, Raquel Rice, Carlie Kudary, Kyle Kane-Maystead, Josephine Hosner, Jonathan Eager, Adam Grabowski, and, Maddie Petersen. Congratulations!

Along with being in the Top Ten, Andrew Phelps earned the Principal's Leadership Award and Raquel Rice has earned the Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR) Good Citizen Award. The Young Women's Christian Association (YWCA) Woman of Achievement Award was given to Kristin Gustavson, a graduating senior headed to University of Iowa to study speech and hearing sciences along with American Sign Language.



Here are two of the KIA recognized artists. On the left is Sierra Stevens with her graphite drawing titled "Opinions" and on the right is Malaynah Leach and her graphite drawing "Untitled".

The Arts is another field of endeavor that has recently recognized the achievements of several VHS students. The following students artwork was selected for the 2017 Kalamazoo Institute of Arts High School Area Art Show: Malayna Leach, Sierra Stevens, Abdo Belkhaty, Sarah Brabon, Jaymie Daniel Gapayao, and Amanda Munn and Att Chaiviriyawong. This makes VHS a leader in the biggest high school art competition in the nine county area.

Jaymie Gapayao won the Director's Merit Award and Juror's Honorable Mention for his photograph titled "Beauty by the Barrier" and won a scholarship to Kendall School of Art and Design in Grand Rapids for his photograph titled, "The Lookout". Malaynah Leach won a scholarship to the Cleveland Institute of Art for her drawings. Sierra Stevens was awarded a scholarship to Western Michigan University's Gwen Frostic School of Art as well as the KIA Kirk Newman Art School Scholarship Award for her graphite drawing titled "Opinions". Sarah Brabon won Juror's Honorable Mention for her photograph titled, "Tool Box".

In our EFE programs, Emma Piper and Cole Richter were named Outstanding Students for their work in Computerized Manufacturing. Students who are reaping the benefit of their efforts with film and video are Eric Hatter, Seamus Hyman, Logan Workman, Alex Hamilton, Alex Smith and Heidi Schwartz.

The work continues, the crop is seeded, fertilized and cared for, the end result being a bountiful harvest. These students represent our harvest, a season of celebration, then the work begins anew for the next harvest.

“LEADER IN ME” FAMILY NIGHT

Sunset Lake Elementary hosted their first annual *Leader in Me* Family Night on March 22. The *Leader in Me* is a whole school transformation process that teaches leadership and life skills to students while creating a culture of student empowerment. The program is based on the book *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People* by Stephen Covey. Every child is a leader and Sunset Lake provides opportunities for all students to develop to their full potential. Nearly 200 families attended to learn about the 7 habits through interactive student-led stations. The standing-room only event began with a brief introduction by Amie McCaw. Student leaders then broke the guests into groups to lead them through nine stations. These student-led stations included introductions to each of the 7 habits, a display of leadership notebooks highlighting academic growth, a student Q & A session, the creation of family mission statements and the annual Spring Book Fair. Coat check and childcare were provided by students as well. Over 100 students were key participants in planning and carrying out this special evening for families. The night ended with a performance by the kindergarten classes and the 4th and 5th grade choir.



Students from several grade levels share how *The Leader in Me* has impacted their lives.

ADDITIONAL AWARDS AND RECOGNITIONS

While each staff member is an important and valuable part of the school family responsible for student success, two staff members received noteworthy recognitions.

After being nominated by colleagues, parents and administrators, Laura Chang, a second grade teacher, was a top ten finalist (out of four hundred entries) for Michigan’s Teacher of the Year. Laura’s qualifications included her professional and community involvement, leadership skills, positive attitude, and strong growth mindset.

This year’s area Battle of the Books 2017 was won by a team from Sunset Lake Elementary and Vicksburg Middle School. The team called Readers Readers Everywhere was coached by Tamara Young and Alicia Zagar. Team members included Molly Young, Morgan Zagar, Grant Van Woert, Brady Young, Clara Centofanti and Tyler Fenwick. Readers Readers Everywhere beat out 31 other teams to win the championship. This is the second year in a row that a team with Sunset Lake ties has been victorious!



Emcees Emily Malito and Fletcher Haase welcome guests to start our Leadership Day.

LEADERSHIP DAY

Sunset Lake Elementary also hosted their first annual Leadership Day on May 19. The doors were opened to the community to allow others to see the transformation that has taken place within their building for both staff and students. Guests were welcomed into the school with a group of students greeting them and guiding them into the cafeteria. The day continued with a presentation about Habit 7, Sharpen the Saw, by the Sunset Lake Kindergarteners. Classroom tours followed allowing visitors to see student leaders in action. The morning concluded with a lunch and a Q & A, facilitated by a group of Sunset Lake’s student leaders. Members of the Vicksburg School Foundation, Board of Education, Tobey and Indian Lake teaching staff and volunteers with Kids Hope and Generous Hands, as well as elementaries around the state were invited to watch students showcase their leadership skills and learn about the *Leader in Me* philosophy and implementation.

AMERICA AND ME ESSAY CONTEST WINNERS

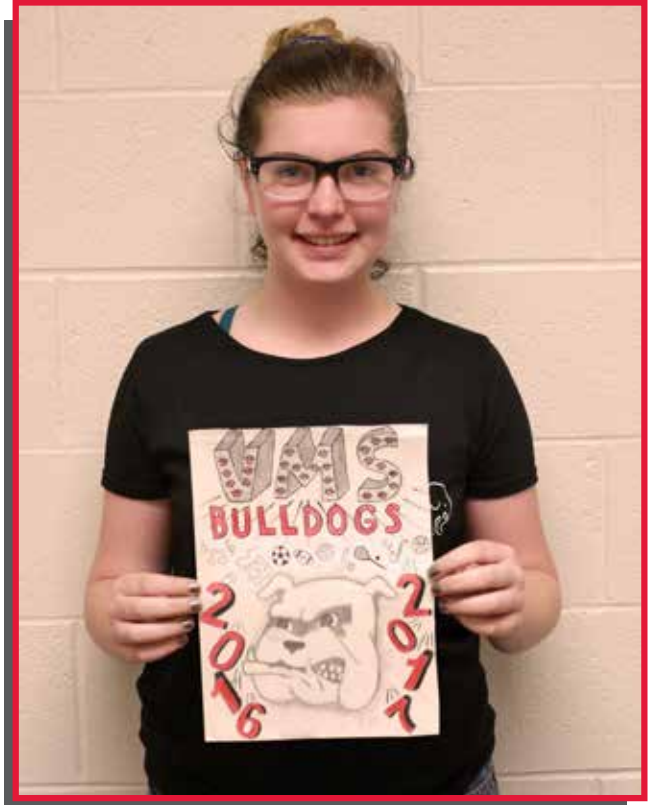
Three students from Vicksburg Middle School have been named local winners in the 48th annual America & Me essay contest, sponsored by Farm Bureau Insurance.

Michael Mendocha received first place, Jacob Fleming, second and Neveah Gates was the third place winner from Vicksburg Middle School. Students received award certificates for their achievement.

Michael's first place essay now advances to the state level competition, from which the top ten essays in Michigan will be selected. As for Michael's decision to write about his, "Michigan Hero," Mom was an obvious choice. Michael is proud of his Mom and her endurance and perseverance in opening The Fulton Little Store. It was a long and sometimes difficult process between the financing and buying of the business and the personal and family sacrifices that were involved. The hard work and dedication paid off when the family excitedly opened The Fulton Little Store in Fall 2016.

Several thousand eighth grade students from over 400 Michigan schools participated in the 2016 – 2017 America & Me Essay Contest, which was conducted with the help of Farm Bureau Insurance agents across the state. The topic of the 2016 – 2017 contest was "My Michigan Hero."

Started in 1968 and open to all Michigan eighth grade students, the contest encourages Michigan youngsters to explore the greatness of America and its people. As sponsor of the contest, Farm Bureau Insurance has earned 11 national awards from the Freedoms Foundation at Valley Forge.



YEARBOOK COVER WINNER:

8th grader, Neveah Gates, is our VMS 2016-17 Yearbook Cover Winner. Her design was chosen from numerous student entries and will be this year's yearbook cover. She will also receive a complimentary personalized yearbook. Congratulations, Neveah!



Congratulations to Adele Wilson (L) and Sawyer Barton (R), our 8th grade students who were invited into the Kalamazoo Area Math and Science Center (KAMSC) program!

STAFF AND STUDENTS... SHOOT AND SCORE

The annual VMS "Staff vs 8th Grade Student Basketball Game" was an exciting, fun event held in March. Students and staff look forward to this competitive rivalry every year! The student team consisted of 8th grade boys and girls that played for VMS during the winter sport's seasons. The staff team was made up of daring "wannabe athletes" that were mostly concerned about not getting injured. Students who were in good academic and behavioral standing made up the energetic audience. After a close game early, the staff gradually pulled away for the victory. Whether you were on the court or in the stands, a fun time was had by all!

NATALIE LAHRKE WINS WRITING COMPETITION

Most eleven year olds go to school without thinking about the opportunity to volunteer themselves into a writing competition, but that is just what Natalie Lahrke did! Not only was it a writing competition but one with all fifth graders in the greater Kalamazoo County competing.

Celebrate Elderhood: Honoring Wisdom & Recognizing Excellence is a writing competition organized by the Area Agency on Aging Region IIIA and the Older Adult Services Advisory Council. It was created to honor senior citizens who have made contributions to later generations. Natalie was given the task to choose a senior citizen special to her and explain why in a rhyming essay. Natalie picked her great-grandmother to write about saying, "It was easy for me to explain why my great-grandma is so special to me, due to all that she does for me and my family."



Here Natalie Lahrke (on right) is with her Great Grandma Alice Pew who inspired her to write an essay to win an event.

There was an honoree dinner held in the ballroom of the Radisson Plaza Hotel for the three winners of the competition and the Honorable Mentions on May 18th, where the students were able to read their essays aloud to an audience that included World War II veterans, senior olympians, public servants, agency officials, and other excellence winners and families. Natalie was able to bring her mother and great-grandmother to share this once in a lifetime experience. Her family could not have been more proud! Krista Wilson, Natalie's teacher was also impressed noting that Natalie did all of the work and writing on her own time outside of school.

PATTY HEINTZELMAN – EDUCATIONAL PARTNER AWARD

To be nominated to represent your building is a high accomplishment but to be chosen by the association you are a part of as a whole district is on another level of achievement.

The winner of the Educational Partners Award is decided by the peers of the nominated in the Vicksburg Education Association (VEA). Each VEA member nominates a candidate from their building who they believe meets a level of excellence. He/she must demonstrate excellence in their field of work, exhibit genuine concern about student's success in academic and/or social arenas and seen as a leader amongst peers and promotes positive school environment.



Educational Partner Patty Heintzelman teaches music class.

Elementary Music Teacher Patty Heintzelman was selected above all due to her qualifications met from the characteristic stated above. Patty goes above and beyond in her role instructing students, supervising choirs, staging programs and promoting the fine arts. On May 8th at the WMU Fetzer Center, Patty was presented with the award.

THERAPY DOG

Tobey third graders are enjoying a new reading buddy this spring. Bella, a five year old purebred Boxer, visits students during silent reading time, taking turns with a few students each session. Students are in control of how close they want to get, if they want to pet Bella, and if they want to read in their heads or aloud.

Parent, volunteer, and Bella's owner Nikki Gerber describes the experience as "a definite win-win for everyone." Teachers enjoy offering the opportunity to sit by Bella as a reward for following the Tobey Way or meeting other classroom goals. Students love petting or just being near the dog on a comfy blanket. Nikki and Bella also gain important volunteer experience which they will translate toward future therapy services.



Ashley Gerber helps her dog Bella practice reading with students.

Bella and Nikki have been working toward becoming a therapy team for hospitals, nursing homes, or Hospice—anywhere they can offer affection, comfort, and companionship. One of the first steps was to help Bella earn her American Kennel Club Canine Good Citizen certificate, which she was awarded in March. The program is designed to recognize dogs

for their outstanding behavior. Nikki is also in the process of registering with the Bright & Beautiful Therapy Dogs group.

Nikki hopes more schools will allow reading or therapy dogs into classrooms in the future. She shared how calming the presence of a friendly animal can be for students, especially those who may not receive as much affection at home as others. One student who was afraid of dogs after a past bite ended up reading right beside Bella and helped thank her with a few treats at the end of the session.

EFE TEACHER ACADEMY STUDENT

Vicksburg High School Senior Kayla Eklund graduating soon and wrapping up her time as an intern in Ms. Herbener's fourth grade classroom.

Kayla participated in the Education for Employment (EFE) Teacher Academy this year. She not only shadowed her mentor teacher during lessons and activities such as the musical, but worked to soak up as much of the teaching

experience as she could. Mrs. Holladay and Ms. MacDonell were always impressed with her curiosity for the best way to present information, problem-solve, or attend to the different needs of each student.

Kayla says she is proud of learning to be in front of a class and getting to know her students one-on-one. She celebrates how much the fourth graders have learned and grown throughout the year. She made special mention of how Tobey students take time to help each other learn by creating a safe, inclusive environment for everyone.

Kayla plans to attend Grand Valley State University where she will study Early Education. She hopes to gain experience teaching in many cities and many types of classrooms. The Tobey staff and students wish her all the best on her journey!

ADOPT-A-SHELF

Tobey students and staff would like to thank and recognize the students who participated in the Adopt-a-Shelf program throughout the school year. Participants volunteered their recess time once a week to tidy their assigned section of a shelf. The idea was proposed by Tobey Library Paraprofessional Tammy Jensen. This year fourth and fifth grade students could apply to take part.

Over a dozen students stuck with the responsibility for the entire year. Three students in particular stood out as deserving special recognition for going above and beyond on the job: fourth grader Adalia Zoeller and fifth graders Conner Jensen and Avery Snook. Conner and Avery worked hard to get ahead on their AR goals so they could devote additional time to keeping the library in top-notch order after they finished their reading M-STEP tests. Mrs. Jensen notes that Adalia was so good at the job she often won "Shelf of the Week" for her outstanding work. She would also finish tidying her shelf so quickly she would offer to help with other odd jobs around the library.



Adalia Zoeller, Conner Jensen, and Avery Snook offer a helping hand in the Tobey library.



COMMUNITY TAILGATE IS SCHEDULED FOR SEPTEMBER 8TH

Vicksburg Community Schools is once again hosting our annual Tailgate Celebration for Friday, September 8 from 4:30-6:30 p.m. when your Vicksburg Bulldogs take on Plainwell. There will be a tent city with local vendors, community organizations, free food and drink, lots of giveaways, a prize drawing and fun all around. Mark your calendars for September 8th and GO DAWGS!

FREE PRESCHOOL OFFERED

Vicksburg Community Schools offers a unique program for children who will be four years old by September 1, 2017. The Bulldog Beginnings Preschool is entirely FREE to all families that qualify. The program focuses on socialization and school readiness skills. Applications are available at the Vicksburg Administration Building or by calling 321-1022.



CALENDAR OF EVENTS

6/4	HS Graduation	2:00 PM	4:00 PM	HS
6/5	LATE START DAY FOR ALL STUDENTS			
6/6	IL PTSO Meetings	6:00 PM	7:00 PM	IL
	SL PTSO Meetings	6:00 PM	7:30 PM	SL
	VMS Choir Concert	7:00 PM	8:30 PM	HS
6/10	Duck Derby at Old Car Festival	12:00 PM		
6/12	Board Meeting	7:00 PM	9:00 PM	VAB Board Room
	Tobey Graduation	9:30 PM	11:30 PM	HS
6/13/17	Indian Lake Graduation	10:30 AM	11:30 AM	HS
	VMS Talent Show	7:00 PM	9:00 PM	HS
6/14/17	LAST DAY OF SCHOOL-1/2 DAY FOR STUDENTS - Teacher Records Day			
	VMS Talent Show/Awards	8:00 AM	11:30 AM	HS
	IL Awards Assembly & Year End Show	9:30 AM	10:30 AM	IL
8/22/17	VMS Give and Take	10:00 AM	6:30 PM	VMS
	VMS Give and Take	10:00 AM	1:45 PM	VMS
9/5/17	First Day of School - All Grades			
9/8/17	Community Tailgate Celebration			
10/9/17	First Late Start day of the Year			

HS - High School • MS - Middle School • SL - Sunset Lake
 IL - Indian Lake • TY - Tobey PAC - Performing Arts Center
 VAB - Vicksburg Administration Building • VS - Vicksburg Stadium

THINGS TO DO THIS SUMMER!

Whether you are looking to improve your athletic skills, try something new, or just hang with your friends, Vicksburg Community Education has something for you to do this summer! Sign up early to ensure your spot for summer fun. Get more info and/or register under "Community Education" on the VCS website or call 321-1022.

- Bulldog Basketball Skills Camp grades 3 – 8 June 19 – 23
- Sanchin Ryu Karate ages 4 – adult June 19 – August 29 (Mondays)
- Volleyball Camp grades 5 – 12 June 20 – 24
- Tennis Camp Session 1 All Levels June 19 – July 14
- Tennis Camp Session 2 All Levels July 17 – August 4
- Youth Football Camp grades 1 – 6 July 24 – 27

2017-2018 SCHOOL CALENDAR NOW AVAILABLE

To view and print a copy of the calendar of the next school year that shows school days, vacations and partial days, go the VCS website at www.vicksburgcommunityschools.org and go to "News and Updates".

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