



# VH Highlights

## Dear Vestal Hills Family,

I hope this letter finds all Vestal Hills families doing well. February brought with it some cold weather, but our **students continue to go outside** for recess when the weather permits, so please remember to send the children to school with **proper clothing**, including pants, jackets, hats, gloves and boots as needed. (Don't forget to have your child check the **Lost and Found** if a coat, hat, hoodie or mitten is missing!)

Our annual **Open House** will take place on Tuesday, March 19, from 6:30-7:30 p.m. All Vestal Hills students and their families are invited to come and see what wonderful activities have been going on in the classrooms. The **PTA Scholastic Book Fair** will be open for business that night from 6-8 p.m. Hope to see you all there.

**Congratulations** to the following staff! A heartfelt thank you for your years of service and all you have done to support and touch the lives of our students in a positive way!

The following staff will be recognized for **10 years** of employment at Vestal:

Amanda Donahue

Shaun Feringa (11 years)

The following staff will be recognized for **15 years** of employment at Vestal:

Patty Giovannone

The following staff will be recognized for **20 years** of employment at Vestal:

Janet Musser

Joan Rurey

Cathy Willis

The following staff will be recognized for **25 years** of employment at Vestal:

Annette Miller

**No school for students** on March 14 and 15 (Superintendent's Conference Day and long weekend).

## Welcome 2019-20 Kindergarteners!

If your child will be five years old on or before Dec. 1, 2019, and will begin kindergarten at Vestal Hills Elementary in the 2019-20 school year, please contact the district office at 607-757-3500 to obtain a registration packet.

## Attendance Reminders

If you are bringing your child to school, please remember that **students should be in their classrooms by 8:50 a.m. Attendance is taken by 8:55 a.m.**

If your **child is late**, please come into the office to sign your child in and provide a written excuse.

If your child is going to be absent from school, please **call the nurse at 607-757-2256**. If there is no answer, you can leave a voice mail. Please send a written excuse for the absence when your child returns to school.

An **excused absence or tardy** is when the student has a valid, school-approved excuse such as personal illness, death in the family, religious observance or medical visit.

An **unexcused absence or tardy** is any absence or tardiness for which the student has no valid, school-approved excuse, such as shopping trips, family vacations and oversleeping.

## Executive Functioning Skills: WORKING MEMORY

Working memory is a basic mental skill. It's important for both learning and doing many everyday tasks.

- Working memory allows the brain to briefly hold new information while it's needed in the short term. It may then help to transfer it into long-term

memory.

- Most kids with learning and attention issues have trouble with working memory.
- Working memory helps kids hold on to information long enough to use it.
- Working memory plays an important role in concentration and in following instructions.
- Weak working memory skills can affect learning in many different subject areas, including reading and math.

Teaching children working memory skills is key to helping them succeed in school and life. As a staff we continue to focus on Working Memory. The following article addresses Working Memory for children within the home and school. Take a look!! [5 Ways Kids Use Working Memory to Learn](#)

**The VHE Math Challenge** Please continue to help your child practice and learn their math facts. We hope you are all engaging in our building challenge to improve our students' math-facts proficiency.

The following online resources and apps support the racks, 10-frames and number lines being used to develop number sense in our K-2 classrooms:

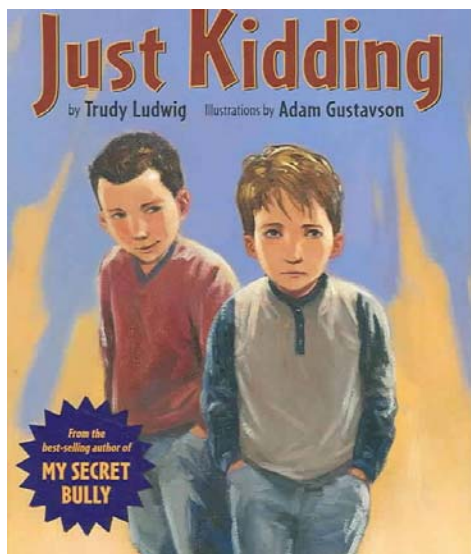
- The Number Rack – [www.mathlearningcenter.org/apps](http://www.mathlearningcenter.org/apps)
- 10 Frame Fill – Classroom Focused Software
- Number Lines – Little Monkey Apps

*"Memorization of math facts is necessary to facilitate mental math, to provide students with fluency during computations, and to move easily through problem situations."* – Susan O'Connell

Have a great spring! Vestal Hills is a great place to learn and grow!

–Mrs. Mastro, Principal





Hello Vestal Hills Families,

The March Principals Book of the Month is an older one but a good one – *Just Kidding* by Trudy Ludwig. How often do you hear children and adults say they were just kidding? Probably more times than you can count. This wonderful book, “Just Kidding” talks about just that!

This story is about a boy named D.J. who is being regularly teased and harassed by another person named Vince who claims to be his friend. Every time that D.J. tries to take action regarding the way that Vince treats him, Vince just claims that he is kidding. It brings to the surface the feelings of being bullied, along with actions to take when being treated this way. Additionally, it focuses on when teasing crosses the line and becomes more than just kidding around.

Our goal is to focus on the main theme of the story about when teasing goes too far. I’m sure we can all make connections to this. We can also use this as a springboard for discussing the actions that can be identified as bullying, along with the actions to take when feeling this way and to discuss the differences between reporting and tattling. Continuing to discuss with students the feelings that it invokes in all people — the bully (power) and the victim (helplessness) along with the self-esteem aspects.

As a school community that continues to focus on Random Acts of Kindness, this is a wonderful book with a focus on teasing or taunting and hurtful vs fun. Our hope is that our students will continue to embrace and demonstrate random acts of kindness in their actions and their words towards others here at VHE and in all other areas of their lives.

# Home-School Connection

Curl up with a good book and read together as a family! **PARP (Pick a Reading Partner)** is a whole-year, K-5 initiative at Vestal Hills - Don't forget to fill in the PARP sheets and return them to the school as you complete 100 lines. Our goal is for every student to reach 500. WE CAN DO IT!

During the week of February 25, Vestal Hills celebrated **READ ACROSS AMERICA Day and Dr. Seuss's birthday** with a week full of activities and events. Try a no-television week at home—read a book instead! Winter is a great time to spend time with your children reading books. Below are some ideas for reading together. Reading books that are easier for your child can help improve their fluency. Reading higher level books together with a parent can help improve vocabulary and comprehension. Research is clear that strong reading skills give your child an advantage in education. As Dr. Seuss says, "The more that you read, the more things you will know. The more that you learn, the more places you will go." Make literacy a priority in your home. Thank you for your support.

**Read Together: Learn Together:** Read aloud to your children, even when they begin to develop the ability to read independently. Read a Dr. Seuss book with a family member. Happy Birthday Dr. Seuss! Read 10 – 20 minutes a night. Set aside a special time for reading each day. This time should be seen as fun, not a chore or homework.

- Cut the letters Vestal Hills Elementary out of the paper or magazine. Make a collage.
- Read a recipe and make a meal together.
- Go to your local library and get a membership card. Take a book out of the library.
- Read an article in the newspaper. Share this news with your family.
- Pick a letter. Find things in your home beginning with the letter. Who found the most?
- Create a book on tape with your family.
- Find books on topics your child will enjoy, like pets, sports and outdoor activities.
- Have children read to you or other children in the family.
- Be a reader yourself; children often follow the example of their parents.
- Bring many books and magazines along on car trips and vacations.
- Visit local bookstores and watch for children's author visits to these stores.

## Counselor's Connections

**Save the Date: March 11** The district is hosting a mental health awareness night at the high school, that focuses on anxiety. It promises to be an informative evening for K-12 parents/guardians on anxiety, the most common mental health concern of today – and the needs are growing. The evening will begin with dinner at 5 p.m. and include child care. We have the rights to an engaging film called *Angst*, and the filmmaker will be there to present to us. Our goal is to bring this information to as many parents, grandparents and caregivers as we can. It is not too early to become aware of the issue that our children face.

**Learning how to make friends** and nurture those friendships is a very important part of our children's lives. Through classroom lessons on friendship and conflict resolution, our children learn the skills they need to maintain healthy relationships.

Our third-, fourth- and fifth-graders will be **taking state tests** soon. Here are a few test-taking strategies to go over with your child/children:

1. Relax
2. Give yourself positive messages
3. Read or listen to the directions with an open mind
4. If you get stuck- don't panic
5. After taking the test, reward yourself

## Mark Your Calendars!

Mon, 4-Mar	VHE PTA MEETING, 7 p.m.
Tues, 5-Mar	Building Planning Team meeting
Sat, 9-Mar	Odyssey of the Mind Competition at BOCES
Sun, 10-Mar	Clocks change - spring ahead
Mon, 11-Mar	Parent Mental Wellness Night: Anxiety, 6 p.m. @ VHS
Tues, 12-Mar	BOE Meeting, 6 p.m.
Wed, 13-Mar	VHE Toddlers' Night Out, 5:45 p.m.
Thurs, 14-Mar	Superintendent's Conference Day
Fri, 15-Mar	Student holiday – no school
Sun, 17-Mar	St. Patrick's Day
18-26 Mar	Scholastic Book Fair
Tue, 19-Mar	Open House, 6:30-7:30 p.m. VHE Book Fair, 6-8 p.m.
Fri, 22-Mar	Report cards sent home
Tue, 26-Mar	BOE Meeting, 7 p.m.
Wed, 27-Mar	VHE PTA Cultural Collage, 6 p.m.

**Happy March Vestal Hills Families!**

We hope everyone is staying healthy and warm this season!! February went by so fast! We held our Winter Bash on the 8th. Thank you to everyone who came out to glow with us!! And thank you to Mandy Diaz for coordinating a great night and to all of the volunteers who pitched in. We also had our Family Night at Skate Estate on the 25. We're so glad so many of you joined us!

**Language Club** begins Tuesday, March 5, and runs for four Tuesdays (3/5, 3/12, 3/26 and 4/20). Any questions can be directed to Elizabeth Ait Oumessaoud at [eaaitoum@gmail.com](mailto:eaaitoum@gmail.com)

Our **Book Fair** will be open after school the week of March 18. It will also be open during our Open House on Tuesday, March 19. Please contact Colleen Hayes ([hayes.colleenm5@gmail.com](mailto:hayes.colleenm5@gmail.com)) for more information.

**Cultural Collage** will be held in the evening on Wednesday, March 27. We hope you will join us for an evening of sharing each other's cultures. Anyone interested in participating can contact Elizabeth Ait Oumessaoud ([eaaitoum@gmail.com](mailto:eaaitoum@gmail.com))



Our next **Spirit Wear** sale will be taking place the second half of the month. Please contact Ryan Burdick ([woodiwiss@yahoo.com](mailto:woodiwiss@yahoo.com)) with any questions.

Flyers on the above events will be coming home with your student shortly. Volunteers will be needed for Book Fair. If you are able to volunteer, please contact the committee chair listed above or as always, you can reach out to me.

We have a Facebook page (Vestal Hills Elementary and PTA) where questions and school information can be shared. If you're not already a member, you may friend-request to join the page. Please answer the questions when prompted to ensure acceptance to the page. Please feel free to Facebook Message or email me if you do not get accepted within a day or two.

Join us for coffee and conversation at our next PTA meeting on Monday, March 4 at 7 p.m.

Sincerely,  
**Amy Burgin** ([akburgin71@yahoo.com](mailto:akburgin71@yahoo.com))  
PTA President

**PTA Meeting Minutes—February 2019**

Called to order Feb , 2019 at 7:03pm

Attendance: 16 members

**Principal's Report** – by Therese Mastro

There was a grant submitted to purchase cookies in the shape of NY state for fourth-grade students from Wegmans. \$2.50/cookie x 60 = \$150. Cathy Willis motioned to approve the grant. Sandra Juriga seconded the motion. All were in favor.

Tri Cities Opera performance was cancelled due to a weather and has been rescheduled in May.

Maker Mondays will start at the end of February.

The school is hosting a CHOW food drive for the month of February to tie in with the morning program, encouraging kindness community wide.

227 cans of soup were collected during the SOUPer Bowl.

Students made cards for nursing home residents and meals on wheels.

Grades 3, 4 and 5 are learning about being kind to themselves and the ripple effect.

VHE Open house will be March 19.

**Box Tops** – by Annie Lindsay

Will have a popcorn party contest with one winner per grade for the classrooms that collect the most box tops.

**Character Ed** – There will be a performance by a drumming crew at Africa Road Elementary School for all 5 elementary Schools. VHE students will be bussed to ARE

**Cultural Collage** – Elizabeth Ait Oumessaoud—

So far very little interest in cultural collage involvement, only 6 countries. There was a discussion on moving the date from Feb 22 to March 27 at 6pm.

**District Council** – Ashley Stuccio

The high school is putting on the production of Newsies Feb 28 - March 3

Running of the Bears – March 30

Radon testing is being done at a number of the schools

Vestal is accepting UPK applications

Africa Road Elementary had their taste of ARE on Jan 16

Clayton Ave is having an art show at the Vestal Museum

**Family Night** – Mandy Diaz—Monday Feb 25 at the skate estate from 5-8pm

**Language Club** – Elizabeth Ait Oumessaoud

Will be held on Tuesdays for third-graders.

Will be four weeks long with one language per week – German, Spanish, French and Chinese

**Room Parents** – Stephanie Matthews

Will need volunteers to bring in cupcakes for Friday March 1<sup>st</sup>

Will need volunteers to bring in healthy snacks for students as they do their state testing in April and May

There will also be a request sent out for food donations for Staff Appreciation and end of

the year party.

**Scripts** – Tara Riesbeck—The next order will be at the end of February.

**Spirit Wear** – Ryan Woodiwiss

A new order is being assembled. There have been requests for items with glitter on them and sweatshirts. A request is being made to the company to see what can be made.

**Square One** – Stephanie Matthews—Art work is being sent out this week to the company.

Individual orders will need to be placed early March and orders usually arrive in April.

**Winter Bash** – Mandy Diaz

Had to reseeded and will now be held on Friday Feb 8

Still asking for food donations from parents and still need two volunteers to help out the night of the event.

**Yearbook** - Rebecca Greyson—The feedback from school pictures was better this year.

**Got Sneakers?** – Cathy Willis—We received \$16.40 for the sneakers that were sent in.

**Book Fair** – Collen Hayes—Will need volunteers to run the book fair for open house, toddlers night out, after school

**President's Report** – Amy Burgin

Trivia night was a lot of fun.

Cathy Willis motioned to adjourn the meeting and Ashley Stuccio seconded the motion.

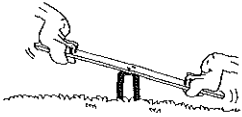


# Home & School

Working Together for School Success

CONNECTION®

Vestal Hills Elementary School  
Mrs. Therese Mastro, Principal



## SHORT NOTES

### Excellent attendance

Being in school every day means your child won't miss out on learning. Try to schedule appointments and family trips outside of school hours. If he asks to stay home "just because," remind him of what he'll miss, such as his reading group or PE class. Explain that he can be absent only if he's sick or if there's a family emergency.

### DID YOU KNOW?

Children who regularly eat meals with their families tend to do better in school and avoid risky behavior.

Eating dinner together is great, but other meals count, too. If you work at night, maybe you could make time for a family breakfast. Or on a weekend, try a picnic lunch.

### Celebrate progress

Suggest that your youngster create a fun reminder of all the things she has accomplished. Let her cover a box with construction paper and label it "I did it!" Then, she can write each success ("I learned to add fractions") on a slip of paper and put it in the box. If she's feeling discouraged, have her read the slips.

### Worth quoting

"The best way to cheer yourself up is to try to cheer somebody else up!"  
Mark Twain

## JUST FOR FUN

**Q:** Can a kangaroo jump higher than the Empire State Building?

**A:** Of course. The Empire State Building can't jump!



## Conversations about school

When you think of parent involvement, do you picture moms and dads volunteering in classrooms? That's one way to help—but research shows that supporting your child's education at home is even more important. Here are conversation starters that will help you stay involved.

### "Let's see what you brought home."

Look at completed work to find out what your youngster is learning and how well she's doing. You could comment on her math work or social studies project, for instance. ("You know a lot about our state's history!") Also, respond to notes from her teacher, and sign her weekly folder or daily planner if required.

### "Show me what you have for homework."

It's your child's job to do her homework, but you play a role, too. Make sure she knows what she's supposed to do by having her explain the assignments to you. After she finishes her homework, glance over the work to see that it's complete.

### "Describe a book you enjoyed today."

This gives you an idea of what your youngster prefers to read. Then, build a daily reading habit by asking what she'd like to read tonight. Encourage her reading and listening skills by reading aloud to her and letting her read to you.

### "Tell me what you learned that you'd like to know more about."

Use her interests as jumping-off points for activities to share. If she likes geometry, you might hunt for

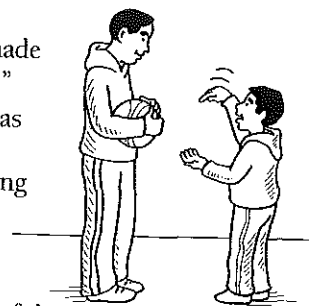


shapes together. If she's fascinated by how animals adapt to winter, take her to the library to research the subject or to the zoo to see live animals.♥

## After-school questions

Asking "How was school today?" might not get you far. Instead, ask questions like these for a better picture of your youngster's day:

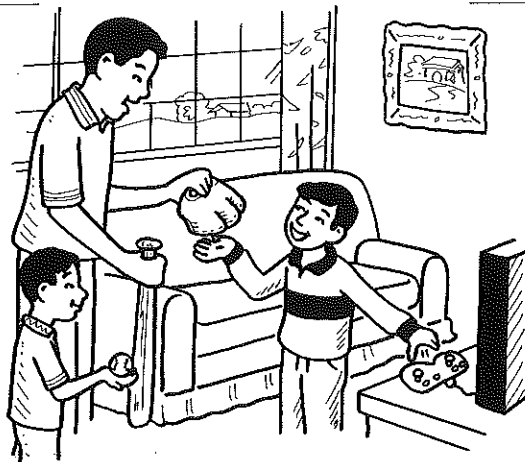
- "What's the coolest thing that happened? What wasn't so cool?"
- "Pretend you're the teacher. How would you describe the day?"
- "What made you laugh?"
- "What was the most creative thing you did?"
- "How were you kind or helpful today? How was someone kind or helpful to you?" ♥



# What does respect look like?

Your youngster's daily dealings with adults and kids alike will be more pleasant if he speaks and acts respectfully. Try these tips for helping him learn about respect.

**Respectful replies.** Think about something that you and your youngster disagree on (say, whether his video game time should be limited). Model having a respectful discussion about it. You might say that his brain and body are growing and that he needs to run and play to stay healthy. Then, suggest a respectful response, such



as, "I want to be healthy, but I love video games." Have him brainstorm other situations where people have different opinions but still speak to each other with respect.

**Everyday acts.** When you mow the lawn or clean up after your dog, you can teach your child about respect for neighbors. Explain that keeping your

neighborhood clean and neat makes it nice for everyone. Ask him to think of other respectful things neighbors should do. If you share an apartment laundry room, he might say that you respect neighbors' time by removing your clothes when they're done so others get to use the washers and dryers.♥

## A reading challenge

By reading more complex books, your child can learn new words, facts, and ideas. He'll also be exposed to more complicated plots and will grow as a reader. Share these suggestions:

- Knowing something about the topic or setting makes a tougher book easier to comprehend. If



your youngster is reading a novel set in China, he could talk to someone who has been there or look up the country online (try a children's site like [kids.nationalgeographic.com](http://kids.nationalgeographic.com)).

- Encourage your child to look at a simpler book on the same subject. A picture-book biography about Harriet Tubman may help your youngster better understand a textbook chapter on the civil rights movement, for instance.

- Suggest that your child read complicated material with pencil and paper in hand. He can jot down questions, words to look up, or facts he wants to learn more about.♥



## Q & A

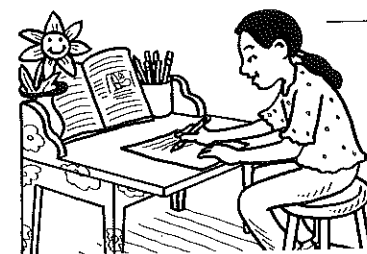
### Strong study habits

**Q:** My third grader has to spend more time studying this year. How can I make sure she studies effectively?

**A:** Set your daughter up for success by helping her find a distraction-free study spot. Also, have her come up with a study routine. For instance, she could reserve time each evening to review her textbook and notes in the days leading up to a test.

Also, many students find it helpful to jot down a purpose each time they study. Your child might write: "I will learn the definitions of all the boldfaced words in chapter 7, section 1."

Finally, encourage her to experiment with study strategies to find what works best. She could close her eyes and imagine how a word is spelled or draw a grid with 9 squares to solve 3 x 3. Or she might find it helpful to spell or recite math facts aloud in rhythm or to a familiar tune.♥



## PARENT TO PARENT

### Talking to kids about money

My children were always asking to buy things like dress-up shoes or new games. They didn't seem to understand that these items weren't in our budget.

I wanted them to learn about how we spend our money—and that it is limited. So I got a spiral notebook and labeled it "Family Spending Journal." I explained that for two weeks, everyone would keep a record of what they spent money on. I listed items like my

subway fare, the electric bill, and food at the grocery store. The children wrote down expenses such as school lunch, soccer cleats, and field trip fees.

After a few days, they were surprised by how many things we needed money for. Our kids had no idea, for example, that we paid for taxes on our income, several types of insurance, and membership in our homeowners' association. Sometimes they still ask to buy too many things at the store, but when I say no, at least they understand why.♥



### OUR PURPOSE

To provide busy parents with practical ideas that promote school success, parent involvement, and more effective parenting.

Resources for Educators, a division of CCH Incorporated  
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INDIEFLIX PRESENTS

# Angst

**March 11, 2019**

**Vestal H.S. Auditorium  
205 Woodlawn Drive, Vestal**



The Vestal Central School District is proud to present a special screening of **"Angst,"** an hour-long documentary about the ways anxiety affects children's lives. After the screening, we will host a panel conversation with local experts and special guest filmmaker, Scilla Andreen.

*The goal of this evening is to **promote wellness and resiliency** by raising awareness of this important topic and providing parents with access to community resources and supports.*

Anxiety disorders are real, common and treatable... **Let's talk about it!**

## SCHEDULE:

5:00 - 6:00/**FREE DINNER**  
and Community Resources

6:00/**ANGST:**  
Raising Awareness  
Around Anxiety

7:15 - 8:00/**PANEL  
DISCUSSION**

8:00 - 8:30/**COMMUNITY  
RESOURCES**

**QUESTIONS OR NEED  
CHILD CARE/ CALL 757-2281**

Recommended for Parents and Children ages 10 & up.

**REGISTER ON THE DISTRICT WEBSITE -  
VISIT THE HOME PAGE & CLICK "ANGST" LINK**

For Free Dinner and/or Child Care, please RSVP by March 4.

**Sponsored by the Vestal CSD and**



# March

**GROWING A GARDEN OF LEADERS!!!**

## VESTAL HILLS ELEMENTARY

**2019**

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
					Day 1 1 Read Across America  End of Marking Period	2
3	Day 2 4  PTA 7PM	Day 3 5 4th Gr Step It Up K-1 Puppet Show	Day 4 6	Day 5 7 2-3 Puppet Show	Day 6 8	9 Odyssey of the Mind @ BOCES
10	Day 1 11 5th Gr Step It Up  Parent Info Night -Mental Wellness-Anxiety	Day 2 12 Kelso-Finch/Barney Glazer/Schmidt Wendell/Baechtle BOE Mtg 6pm	Day 3 13 3rd Gr Step It Up Kelso-Krowiak/Sonnen  Toddlers' Night Out	14 Superintendent's Conference Day	15 Student Holiday-No School	16
17 VHE BOOK FAIR March 18 <sup>th</sup> - 22 <sup>nd</sup>	Day 4 18	Day 5 19 4th Gr Step It UP  Open House Growing as Learners	Day 6 20	Day 1 21 Kelso -2	Day 2 22  Report Cards go home	23
24	Day 3 25 Buddy Day	Day 4 26  BOE Mtg 7PM	Day 5 27 Awards & Celebration  PTA-Cultural Collage 6PM	Day 6 28  MS Musical Visit Willy Wonka	Day 1 29	30
31						

**Team Time Suggestions:** THINK, Habit-Seek First to Understand than be Understood

**Overarching Theme:** Empathy, Self-Control, Action, Self Confidence

**Book of the Month:** Just Kidding by Trudy Ludwig