

Project Golden Bear presents Katie Greer on Internet Safety

Adistrict-wide initiative to give our families the tools to keep their children safe while navigating the Internet is scheduled for Wednesday, March 6. Distinguished Internet safety keynote speaker Katie Greer will be speaking to students in grades 3 - 12 during the day on March 27 in four separate presentations at Vestal Middle and High Schools.

In the evening, she will offer a presentation for parents and guardians in the African Road Auditorium. As this newsletter went to print, final details were being determined; visit the Homepage of the District website for more information - www.vestal.stier.org/Default.aspx

Ms. Greer brings a wealth of experience about keeping kids safe on the Internet from her work with the Massachusetts Attorney General's Office and the Massachusetts State Police. She is an influential public scholar on issues related to child and adolescent online safety, and her presentation is appropriate for parents who have students in any grade. Information and resources from local mental health and community organizations will also be available during the evening event.

VHS students Arden Kaldis, Ethnie Calvert, Montana Eldridge and Taninnat Yosanankatanyu donated blood for the first time.



Grandfather Richard Lindaman with his grandson, Malcolm, was just one of the veterans honored by Tioga Hills students on November 9.

See more tributes by ARE & VHS on pages 4 & 5

Upcoming Date Reminders:

African Road/Vestal MS Orchestra Concert;

7 p.m., February 7 (African Road Auditorium)

Tioga Hills Winter Concert;

7 p.m., February 8 (Tioga Hills)

Vestal HS Chamber Music & Cookies;

7 p.m., February 9 (VHS Auditorium)

ACT; 7:45 a.m., February 10 (Area Schools)

School Board Meeting;

6 p.m., February 13 (Clayton Avenue)

No School; February 16 & 19

Vestal HS Musical - "High School Musical;"

7 p.m., February 22 7 p.m., February 23 7 p.m., February 24 1 p.m., February 25

School Board Meeting; 6 p.m., February 27 (Vestal Administration BOE Conference Room)

Vestal Hills Cultural Collage;

6 p.m., February 28 (Vestal Hills)

Early Release Day; March 1 (*Dismissal Times:* VMS - 10:45 / VHS - 11:05 / ELEM. - 11:45 a.m.)

BCMEA Festival II; 4 p.m., March 1 (VMS) All Day, March 2 (B.U. Anderson Center)

Junior Parent College Information Night; 6:30 p.m., March 6 (VHS Cafeteria)

BCMEA Festival I; March 8 (Windsor) All Day March 9 (B.U. Anderson Center)

VHS Student Government Talent Fest;

7 p.m., March 9 (VHS Auditorium)

Broome County Odyssey of the Mind;

March 9 (Broome-Tioga BOCES)

Daylight Savings Time begins; March 10 Spring forward 1 hour

See the District website calendar for updated event information: www.vestal.stier.org/protected/MasterCalendar.aspx



Hello, Golden Bear Community!

I am so thankful for the opportunities I have had to meet District stakeholders - students, staff, parents, community members - since I stepped into the Superintendent's Office in October.

I've continued my leadership role by joining parent-group meetings at all of the schools during October/November, listening to your views, answering your questions, and being available to our school community.

I've been privileged to attend many athletic events, student presentations, and evening events, including the Taste of ARE. I even presented awards at the Golden Circle of Bands. It is at these celebrations the culture of our District is expressed. My goal is to be not only a visible presence throughout the Vestal Central School District, but a listening, receptive, and engaging presence. Relationships are what make Vestal "Golden," and the key to fulfilling my leadership role is to focus on building relationships.

This relationship-building extends to the greater Vestal community. Recently, I was pleased to host new Vestal Town Supervisor Maria Sexton at our District Offices. I have attended Town of Vestal Board and planning meetings, advocating for our SRO program and working on cost-saving ways to collaborate.

Currently, we are working on construction and renovation initiatives included in our Capital Project, approved by District voters in December 2022. In addition, we are building the School Budget for the 2024-25 school year, reviewing budget lines, assessing expenditures, and doing all we can to propose a fair budget for consideration on May 21, 2024. As in everything I do, transparency is paramount to this process.

Challenge 2

From the Superintendent's Den

Continued from page $\bar{2}$

As we progress through this school year, I want to assure you that my team and I are always dedicated to ensuring the safety and well-being of our students and staff. I am pleased to lead our District into the next chapter and am committed to sharing with everyone what makes Vestal great!

Stay Golden, Vestal!

CENR Kun

Clifford R. Kasson

Superintendent of Vestal Schools



Before his appointment, Superintendent Kasson was a guest reader in Mrs. Turner's third-grade classroom at African Road in September.

Coordinator of Special Education

Welcome to Brian Fowler, Vestal's new Coordinator of Special Education and Chair of the Committee on Special Education (CSE). He joined the District on November 13, 2023, and brings with him a rich background in teaching and consulting on Special Education programs.

A resident of the Southern Tier since 2012, Mr. Fowler is a native of Pennsylvania and received his undergraduate degree from St. Vincent College. He received his graduate degree from Binghamton University and has served as a Special Education instructor exclusively, with experience teaching 6:1:1, 12:1:1, and 15:1 classes.* He has also enjoyed co-teaching, acting as a direct consultant to Special Education programs, and serving as a CSE chairperson.



"I decided to become an administrator to help make plans that benefit students' long-term success, and to support teachers in carrying out those plans," said Mr. Fowler. "I look forward to building positive relationships with Vestal families and teachers."

Proud to have a small, but growing family that is attending Vestal Schools, Mr. Fowler will work alongside Angelia Eggleston, Assistant Director of Special Education, who also serves as Chair of the District's Committee on Preschool Special Education (CPSE), and Katherine Mazourek, Director of Special Education. Please visit the District's Special Education Department web page at www.vestal.stier.org/SpecialEducation.aspx for contact details and more information on the District's Special Education program and other services.

*Class Modalities - A 6:1:1 class includes 6 students, one teacher, and one aide; it serves students with mild to severe emotional disabilities. A 12:1:1 class includes 12 students, one teacher, and one aide; it provides services to students whose educational and developmental needs require additional adult support to access the curriculum. A 15:1 class includes 15 students and one teacher; students in this setting need additional academic support which cannot be met in a general education classroom.

Notice of Pesticide Application: NYS Education Law Section 409-H, effective July, 2001, requires all public and non-public elementary and secondary schools to provide written notification to all persons in parental relation, faculty, and staff regarding the potential use of pesticides periodically throughout the school year. The following pesticide application took place in Rooms 147, 148, and 149 at African Road Elementary on October 6, 2023: Onslaught Microencapsulated Insecticide & Advion Gel. You may request 48-hour notification at www.vestal.stier.org/Downloads/Pest Notification 2023-24.pdf



African Road Elementary

African Road held its annual Veterans Day assembly on November 8, 2023. Special guests from the non-profit "Stand With Me Assistance-Dog Team Training," which helps support veterans with

service-related mental health disabilities, came to talk to students. Founder Francess McMahon and Jeff, a veteran who brought his service dog Abby Ann, were thankful to receive a donation of over \$764. The funds were raised through a schoolwide coin drive which took place October 16 -November 6.

Clayton Avenue Elementary

Clayton Avenue hosted a Holiday Food Drive before break. Students and staff collected 354 food items, which were donated to the Vestal High School Food Pantry!

Glenwood Elementary

During its schoolwide "15 Days of Holiday Cheer," Glenwood focused on "A Time for Giving" on December 8. Students and staff were asked to bring in an item for the school's Snack Pack program. Proceeds from Glenwood's School Store, which runs every 6 - 8 weeks were also donated to the Snack Pack program. Many thanks to Fifth-Grade Ambassadors who organize the School Store by selecting products to sell, setting the profit margin, manning the tables during shopping periods, and counting the money collected.



Fifth-Graders Salvatore Peretore, Melani Howell, Gianna Casterline, and Sophia Secord help Apalachin Lions Club members pack up the food donations their school collected.

John Whiting box up the donations at the school. The fifth-grade Community Box Project at Tioga Hills is a holiday tradition that completes a social studies unit on wants and needs. Facilitated

by fifth-grade teachers Sarah Gilliland and Corinne Schake each year, the students also learn a lesson in kindness and giving back to the community.



Guests from "Stand By Me" visited African Road on November 8.



Glenwood fifth-graders Marianah Hessler, Sarisha Singhal, Cayden Potter, and Noah Williams help run the school store. (Photo courtesy of Stephanie Mitsakos)

Tioga Hills Elementary

Tioga Hills staff and students teamed up with the Apalachin Lions Club for its annual Holiday Food Drive. This tradition, in its 20th year, collected more than 865 non-perishable food items and \$75 in monetary donations for food

banks in our community! On December 5, Student Council members Gianna Casterline, Melani Howell, Salvatore Peretore, and Sophia Secord helped Apalachin Lions Dave Houser, Bob Jensen, Dave Rupright, Jerry Strazik, Pete Sylvester, and



Fifth-Grader Aiden Gorey with one of the boxes he decorated and wrapped.

Support

This year, 50 shoe boxes filled with personal-care items donated by fifth-graders and their families were given to the Park Terrace Community Food Pantry. The fifth-graders wrapped and decorated the boxes with care and delivered them to the pantry in person.

Vestal Hills Elementary

Vestal Hills students and staff collected toys to donate to Toys for Tots as part of the Vestal HS Interact Club's annual drive. The school collected toys from the end of November until mid-December, contributing around 100 toys for this drive.

Vestal Middle School

Middle School students schoolwide raised over \$875 for the Children's Hospital of Philadelphia with a Pajama Day that seventh-grade classes hosted on December 8.

Vestal High School

Students in the Success Seminars course coordinated leadership projects in October and November to benefit two community organizations. For the October project, led by Sunnia Lewis, purple cookies and cupcakes were baked and sold to raise \$178 for RISE, a local domestic violence shelter. In November, Cameron Smith and Mila Loiselle led a drive that collected \$50 and two large boxes of pet food/ supplies for the B.C. Humane Society.

Student Government purchased 300 American flags to line the school's front walk on November 8 in honor of Veterans Day. They also welcomed veterans visiting VHS, who spoke to students in English and U.S. History classes about their service during the Vietnam War. These honored guests included John Holton (U.S. Navy); Butch Creller (U.S. Army); Lee Spinner (U.S. Army); John Boyer (U.S. Navy); and Bill Chandler (U.S. Marine Corps).

The annual Dig Blue for Liam volleyball tournament, which took place in the VHS gym on November 20, raised over \$565 for FIRST, the Foundation for Ichthyosis and Related Skin Types.

Juniors pursuing the IB Diploma volunteered at CHOW (Community Hunger Outreach Warehouse) on November 21 to begin fulfilling the Creative, Activity, Service requirement of this challenging twovear program.

A wonderful tradition that came back strong last year, the VHS Student Blood Drive to benefit the American Red Cross was November 30... Taninnat Yosanankatanyu celebrated his 16th birthday by giving blood on the first day he was eligible. First-time donor Samuel Armand donated to help the many people who need blood. Other first-time donors who stepped up were seniors Arden Kaldis

pint of blood.

and Ethnie Calvert. Junior Laurel French made sure she was ready by giving over the summer for the first time. Altogether, students donated 59 units of blood, which has the potential to save 177 lives!

PHOTOS, from top: Leen Almatrfi, Junpeng Lu, Amelia Cutting, and Ghena Bataineh hold some of the toys donated for Toys for Tots (Photo courtesy of Cathy Willis)... VMS Sixth-Graders support a good cause with Pajama Day... Reagan Young and Jordan MacDonald sort food at CHOW (Photo courtesy of Jeff Dunham)... Laurel French donates her second



Foster

Universal Pre-Kindergarten *Holiday Culture*

The Cub Care campus of our Universal Pre-K program hosted its annual Holiday Culture event, with students and their parents or other family members working together to assemble some delicious "gingerbread" houses out of frosting, graham crackers and assorted candies.

The Gingerbread House constructed by Zoe and her parents, Jay and Amanda, was a group effort.

African Road Elementary Taste of ARE

The annual Taste of ARE continues to bring the African Road community together year after year. Students and their families "traveled" to 20 different countries including Colombia, Denmark, Ethiopia, France, Ghana, Iceland, India, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Pakistan, Poland, Russia, Rwanda, Scotland, Sri Lanka, South Korea, Tunisia, and more. They were able to learn about the customs and taste some of the authentic cuisines of these countries

Fifth-Grader Maya Smith, with her mother Laura Mejia, represented the country of Colombia.

Clayton Avenue Elementary Word Detectives

Learning how to read is one of the most fundamental skills we can teach our students. Our reading units for elementary students celebrate them reaching their goals. One of the most popular celebrations is the field trip for first-graders to the Super-Secret Detective Agency. Over the course of three days, November 28, 29, and December 1, first-grade classes from all five elementary schools traveled to the SSDA and engaged in a secret mission to decipher some tricky words and help the lead detective, Sir Bookworm, solve a special case!

Sir Bookworm congratulates his new friend, Arnav, on his fantastic Word Detective skills!



Invest



Glenwood Elementary

A Musical Exercise in Physical Education Class

We dropped in on a physical education class on January 19, and Kindergarten students were enjoying a session of Cardio Drumming. Mrs. Siegrist, in collaboration with Mr. Dattoria, came up with this unit that incorporates music with a great workout. In an earlier class, Mr. Dattoria talked to the students about musical beats. In this class, students followed along with certain songs to a video, and Mr. Dattoria's instruction. Older students have the creativity to come up with their own beats. In addition to the cardio workout, this exercise also hones coordination.

Milana, a Glenwood Kindergartner, enjoys the Cardio-Drumming unit!

Tioga Hills Elementary

LEGO Robotics lesson from Lockheed Martin volunteers

Our students always benefit from community connections... Like when volunteers from Lockheed Martin Owego come in with an opportunity to expand their STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Math) experience. On December 8, the Lockheed Martin volunteers brought in LEGO We-Do robotics kits and coordinated with teachers to show students in Grades 3 - 5 how to build, program, and modify robots to carry out a simple task. Many thanks to Tony Casterline, Daniel Crimmins, Jen Gates, Nick Hayko, Rachel Pound, and Bob Wochinger for their time and expertise!

Lockheed Martin volunteer Tony Casterline helps his son, Max, and a classmate, Rosalie Sullivan, build their LEGO robot.

Vestal Hills Elementary Fifth-Grades visit Elderwood Village

Continuing to make those community connections, Vestal Hills fifth-graders and their teachers paid a visit to their neighbors at Elderwood Village on November 1 and 8. The students decided that they wanted to have their Fall parties there, to share their fun with the older community members. The two generations enjoyed learning about one another as they played games and made some seasonal craft projects. This was the first year for this event, and it was very well received by students, parents, and the Elderwood Village residents!

Mazin Khatir has a great time working on a fall craft project with Elderwood Village resident Don Covert.

Challenge

CMBAI FOR THE GOV

Vestal Middle School *Broome County Mathalon Winners*

MS teams scored first and second in BAE Systems Mathalon on December 2, 2023. Congratulations to both of Vestal Middle School's Mathalon teams and their coach, Scott Smith! The Green team of Joshua Cirillo, Zohar Friedman, Yihong Liu, Dylan McKinney, Kush Patel, Daphne Stang, and Evan Zheng won first place. The Gold team of Kenan Agung, Leafen Beaston, Josiah Cason, Aniket Govindaraju, Leyla Kamil, Darsh Kukkar, and Asher Pasha finished in second place. In addition, Leyla was awarded a special trophy for winning an individual round, in which Evan was the runner-up.

The students showed great sportsmanship and teamwork as they competed with these schools from around the area: Binghamton Middle School, St. John School, Windsor Middle School, and Chenango Valley Middle School, who also sent two teams.

Many thanks to the Mathalon's annual sponsor, BAE Systems, and to Binghamton University for hosting the competition!



Top; First-place Mathalon winners on the Green team
- Joshua Cirillo, Dylan McKinney, Evan Zheng, Yihong
Liu, Daphne Stang, Kush Patel, and Zohar Friedman.
Above; Members of the second-place Gold team - Leafen
Beaston, Leyla Kamil, Asher Pasha, Josiah Cason,
Kenan Agung, Darsh Kukkar, and Aniket Govindaraju.
(Photos courtesy of Scott Smith)

Nestal High School

Left to right; College Board National Recognition Program Scholars Genessis Nwugwo, Ellie Friedman, John-Claude Parfait, and Michael Juriga II.

Left; Congratulations to our College Board National Recognition Program Awardees!..

Ellie Friedman and Michael Juriga II were honored as National Hispanic Recognition Program Scholars.

Genessis Nwugwo and John-Claude Parfait received awards as National African-American Program Scholars.



Mr. Klatt, Donovan Donlin, and Nathan Klym. (Photo courtesy of Kaitlyn Hession)

Counseling & Guidance Remodel

Thanks to students in Mr. Klatt's Civil Engineering class last year, the Counseling & Guidance office has a fresh new look! To improve workflow and create a quiet place for students to relax, Mrs. Smith, Counseling & Guidance District Chair, asked for help from Mr. Klatt and his students. The students rose to the task, measuring the space, conducting surveys of students and staff, and creating and presenting their designs. There were three finalists - Donovan Donlin, Nathan Klym, and Andrea Waldmiller. Aspects of all three designs were incorporated in the revamp, with Vestal

CSD's maintenance staff doing the work of painting, moving bookcases and desks, and installing a sensory marble wall panel. Final modifications were completed in early December.

Thanks to this innovative collaboration, our students gained real-world experience in the form of interviewing, public-speaking and presentation skills. Plus, Counseling & Guidance staff now have a brighter and more efficient setting in which to serve their students!

Life & Career Readiness Class

Another collaboration was coordinated between Mrs.
Thompson's Life & Career Readiness class, BOCES
Equipment Repair & Operations students, and our Transportation mechanics. After a lesson about the costs of purchasing and owning a vehicle, Mrs. Thompson thought that her students would benefit from learning about basic car maintenance. School Counselor Becky Martino arranged for someone from the Department of Labor to come in with VLR (virtual learning reality) goggles that let students experience changing a car's oil.

The following week, Transportation Supervisor Ken Starr offered the class his wash bay to get a hands-on lesson from Transportation mechanic Matt Darrah on December 7. Mr. Darrah showed the students how to check fluids, remove a car's air filter, and use a tire gauge.



Mr. Darrah and Zain Qureshi read the tire gauge after checking air pressure.



NYSSMA All-State 2023

We are pleased to share that three Vestal HS Music students were selected to perform in the New York State School Music Association (NYSSMA) All-State Winter Festival November 30 - December 3, 2023. Congratulation to Ian Chung (Viola), Rayna Cui (Soprano), and Sua Choi (Violin) on this prestigious honor!

Ian Chung, Rayna Cui, and Sua Choi. (Photo courtesy of Amelia Wilson)

Foster 9



National Honor Society Induction

Ongratulations to the newest members of our NHS Green & Gold Chapter! These students were inducted on December 18, 2023, in the Vestal HS Auditorium:

Samira Alhalob	Keira DeVantier	Hannah Nemecek	Leila Shahrouzi	Hannah Smyk
Aashna Ashok	Daksh Dhamsania	Genessis Nwugwo	Milana Smirnoff	Mary Sonnen
Camryn Behonick	Sanjana Dwaraka	Jia Parikh	Kelsey Smith	Addison Stockwin
Cayman Bruce	Evan Foran	Arden Kaldis	Owen Peters	Thomas Vallely
Amelia Chiu	Laurel French	Abhiram Kandanati	Lauren Policare	Maya Vidal-Laramee
Sua Choi	Zachary Frye	Logan Kim	Sneha Poranki	Logan Webster
Kiely Christophersen	Anne-Marie Gabel	Jackson Lamoureux	Ariella Rabineau	Chloe Wirth
Ella Cody	Ava Gates	Jordan MacDonald	Hibah Rahman	Joy Xiao
Charlotte Coker	Camden Gendron	Owen Majka	Jay Ratterree	Jessica Yetsko
Josiah Cooley	Madelyn Hampp	Eva Metritikas	Caroline Reyen	Reagan Young
Sebastian Coulton	Amina Haq	Jack Miller	Meredith Ryan	Evan Zheng
Keith Dai	Wassim Hila	Amatul Mirza	Nader Sabawi	Jonathan Zheng
Ryleigh Dando	Tristan Holden	Max Mitsakos	Lora Sarkisyan	Delphine Zinkin-Fan
Hridayanshu Das	Alex Jiao	Alexandra Mulcahy	Ryan Scarangella	
Ayden Davy	Megan Jones	Tasfiya Naser	Ava Schmidt	



From left to right; Maxwell DeWind, John McIntyre, Georgia Blackwell, and Kate Reyen. (Photo courtesy of Dawn Young.)

New Visions' Innovision

Superintendent Clifford Kasson and Vestal High School Principal Dawn Young were pleased to watch as four of our students joined their Broome-Tioga BOCES New Visions Business Academy class at the Koffman Southern Tier Incubator to present on a company they created - Innovision.

The students, Georgia Blackwell, Maxwell DeWind, John McIntyre, and Kate Reyen, designed a business plan along with the 11 other students in the business academy. Learning from their mistakes along the way, they executed their plan and developed two

products - a mental health tote bag and odor-eliminating charcoal pouches - which they marketed through Innovision, a Junior Achievement Company.

Congratulations to Georgia, Maxwell, John, and Kate on being part of a very professional business presentation on January 10! They and their other New Visions classmates decided to donate \$4,000, a majority of the company's net income, to the Mental Health Association of the Southern Tier.

Invest 10

GOLDEN BEAR AVI'H LET'I CS

Letter of Intent Signings





Cat Petteys & Kendall Brady

In a joint ceremony on November 15, 2023, Cat Petteys signed her National Letter of Intent, accepting a Division 1 Softball scholarship to play with the UConn Huskies! She plans to major in Psychological Science.

Also signing on that date was her teammate Kendall Brady, who signed her NLI to play Field Hockey with the Division 1 College of the Holy Cross Crusaders! She plans to major in Biology.

Chloe Burkhard & Reilly Storer

In another joint ceremony on November 7, 2023, teammates Chloe Burkhard and Reilly Storer signed their National Letters of Intent! Chloe will be playing field hockey for the D'Youville University Saints, where she plans to major in Business.

Reilly will join the Mounties softball team at Mansfield University, where she plans to study Education.

(Photo by Athletic Director Josh Gannon)

Fall Sports Wrap-Up

We think all of our student athletes are Golden, but join us as we celebrate the special accomplishments of these teams:

Our Field Hockey team scored their second New York State Championship in a row!

Boys Cross Country, Football, Girls Soccer, Girls Tennis, and Volleyball teams all scored Section IV championships!

Boys Soccer, Girls Soccer and Girls Swimming/Diving were crowned STAC Champs!

FALL SCHOLAR ATHLETES

We applaud Golden Bears on nine Fall Sports teams! A total of 160 Varsity athletes received Scholar Athlete Awards through the NYSPHSAA (NYS Public High School Athletic Association) Scholar Athletes Program.

Altogether, they scored a combined average of 95.17! For a list of student rosters for every team, visit the Athletics web page and look for the Fall 2023 Scholar Athletes link in the right column.



Sammy Baek

Boys Lacrosse mid-fielder Sammy
Baek signed his National Letter
of Intent on January 17, 2024.
He will be joining the Division I
Air Force Falcons (U.S. Air
Force Academy) in the Fall
and plans to study Finance.





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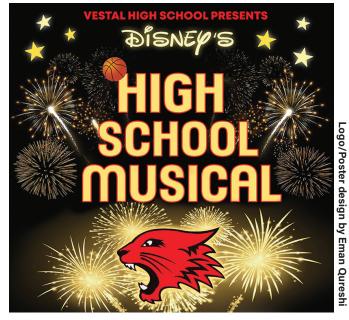
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Mark your calendars for these great musicals coming up in February & April 2024!



7 PM - FEB 22, 23, 24 1 PM - FEB 25 on sale



www.vestal.stier.org/MusicDepartment.aspx

VMS PRESENTS



7 PM - APRIL 26 & 27 / 2 PM - APRIL 28

TICKET SALES ANTICIPATED TO BEGIN MARCH 25

