

THE HAWKS' NEST

Valley Ridge Academy

Volume 3 Issue 1
September 2016

Message from the Principal

Parents and Guardians,

I would like to begin by expressing how excited I have been to see and meet so many of you at our Curriculum Chats the past week. We have our final two Curriculum Chats for grades Pre-K – 3 this upcoming week and I look forward to meetings those parents as well. The connection between home and school is vital to the success of each and every student and I encourage each of you to continue an open dialogue with your child's teacher on a regular basis.

If you are interested and able to volunteer as a testing proctor here at Valley Ridge, please go to our PTO's webpage or click here:

<http://www.signupgenius.com/go/5080e4ba8ac238-testing1> to sign-up. Thank you so much for considering volunteering for this important task. Just as a reminder, per Florida Law all volunteers and visitors to Valley Ridge need to be cleared through the District Keep N Track system. This includes anyone coming onto campus for any reason such as to have lunch with your child. If you or a family member still need to complete this process, the link to do so can be found on the school website or at the following link:

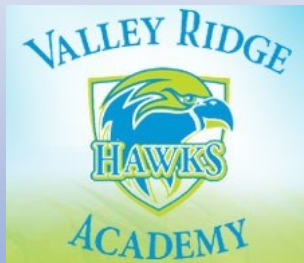
<https://knt3.keepntrack.com/HTML/KnTOnlineVolunteerApplication.html?db=stjohns&version=2.72.41>

Lastly, please be aware that the weather make up day for students will be Monday, October 17th. Valley Ridge will observe normal operations on this date. More information can be found on the St. Johns County School District website. Thank you all for your continued support, and Go Hawks!

Sandra McMandon

Calendar of Events

- 9/19 PTO Membership Breakfast 8:30 a.m.
Volleyball vs. Murray at VRA 5:30 p.m.
- 9/20 Boy Scout Meeting-Cafeteria 5-7 p.m.
- 9/21 Volleyball vs GRMS @ Gamble 5:30 p.m.
Parent Leadership Council Meeting-Media 6 p.m.
- 9/22 Art Smart Parent Orientation 8:30 a.m.
Football vs Patriot Oaks @ Creekside High 5 p.m.
Boy Scouts Parent Sign-Up-Cafeteria 6 p.m.
- 9/23 Spirit Day-Wear Your VRA Gear!
- 9/26 Tumbling Team Try Outs 3:15-3:45 p.m.
Volleyball vs Sebastian @ Sebastian 5:30 p.m.
- 9/28 Football vs PBMS @ Pacetti Bay 5 p.m.
Volleyball @ 5:30 p.m.
- 9/30 Spirit Day-Wear Your VRA Gear!
- 10/7 Character Counts! Responsibility Celebrations
- 10/13 & 10/14 Fall Middle School Book Fair
- 10/18 through 10/21 Elementary Book Fair
- 10/22 Fall Festival





The following students were chosen by their teachers in September for exemplifying The Fairness Pillar of Character

Page Adamski	Bryce Frick	Nyla Mayers	Rachel Samilian
Chloe Armour	Ty Gebauer	Daniel McClellan	Laura Schaffstein
Ali Baghalan	Johnny Greco	Chloe McConnell	Logan Scarbrough
J.R. Beach	Payton Grex	Autumn McGill	David Sennholtz
Cody Belizaire	Emma Gunther	Laney Medure	Lila Smith
Cullen Berg	Leo Halman	Oliver Minch	Addison Syme
Austin Bryant	Colton Hedge	Kacie Minx	Ashlyn Terry
Lainie Cadieu-George	Matthew Henz	Valentino Moore	Emsley Thornton
Corbyn Cady	Maddie Hollis	Molly Murphy	Kelsey Tobin
Caroline Castellon	Lauren Hughes	Zuhair Niazi	Caroline Triplett
Chloe Chandler	Bryce Ingle	Elizabeth Parker	Connor Underwood
Mia Lee Chong	Sarah Isaacs	Brooklyn Pennington	Marco Vasquez
Stephen Cuellar	Ryder Jacobsen	Reese Peterson	Netra Veng
Olivia Drayton	Albio Jakupi	Addison Rennie	Piper Voorhees
Ellie DiPatre	Jude Kruger	Keyniah Riddick	Wynter Whitehead
Emma Dresback	Sarah Lamb	Liam Romosz	Gabriel Williams
Brianne Easterly	Micah Manning	John Rowan	Stella Williams
Adrian Figueroa	Liam Markle	Matthew Rowan	Kara Yeaton
Kingston Fowler	Noah Mayers	Alyssa Salomon	



VALLEY RIDGE GUIDANCE DEPARTMENT

Welcome to our new middle school students and their families! The transition to middle school is different for everyone. Your child may be anxious about changing classes or remembering their locker combination. Some may feel excited about the new freedoms that come in middle school or all of the new friends they will meet. Either way, know there will be ups and downs along the way. The middle school guidance department is here to help.

Here are a few important suggestions for parents: Communicate with your student every-day about how things are going, the areas where they may need your help, and encouraging him or her to stay engaged and on top of the workload from day 1. Celebrate their accomplishments. Cheer them on and praise their efforts. Reach out to teachers at the first warning flag concerning academics. Get to know your child's middle school friends. Monitor their after school free time. Middle school years are the beginning of the struggle for independence and independence is best earned through demonstrating responsibility.

We are looking forward to a great 2016-2017 school year and appreciate you trusting us to partner with you in our student's education.

Mrs. Dawn Anzualda

Grief & Loss Group

Our middle school guidance department is preparing to offer a new Grief & Loss Group. The group will began October 4th and run for 6-8 weeks, meeting weekly. The group will be heterogeneous, consisting of middle school aged students, ages 11-14. The group is not intended to replace the therapeutic counseling families may be already receiving. It is to provide a safe place for students who have experienced a loss; where they can identify with other students, share feelings, and coping strategies, and learn about the stages of grief to normalize any emotional struggles that may be affecting their social or academic success. Information and permission forms are available in Mrs. Anzualda's office or by calling 904-547-4110.

SQUARE 1 ART

more than an art fundraiser...a tradition!

We are starting our year off with a BANG in the Art room. Your students have been working diligently creating beautiful works of art that will be available for purchase and reprinted onto a variety of creative keepsakes. Here are just a few examples of Valley Ridge student art. Square 1 Art order forms will be coming home soon with more information and pricing. These make great holiday gifts too.

Ms. Lauren Bayliss - Elementary Art Teacher



Pre-K is creating a primary colored butterfly #cutestselfie
Example by Brielle



Kindergarten just finished their watercolor sunsets inspired by Claude Monet.
Example by EllaRae



1st Grade is studying the Abstract artist Kandinsky practicing line, color, and shape.
Example by Taylor H.



2nd Grade is working on collage and tearing up a storm with their Winslow Homer inspired seascape.
Example by Silea



3rd Grade has been learning about the modern artist Piet Mondrian and his evolution of artistic styles.
Example by Presley H.



4th Grade is working on a monster wave of a masterpiece, these are taking a bit longer to recreate Hokusai's Great Wave of Kanagawa, but should be finished soon. Here is an example of a beautiful work in progress from Mrs. Hogan's class.



5th grade is finishing up their foreground/ background painting. These are looking gorgeous!
Here is an example by Cooper C.



Mystery Reader in 2nd Grade

Mrs. Myers' second grade students were thrilled to welcome VRA's new Principal Ms. McMandon to their class on Friday, August 19th as their first mystery reader of the school year!

Ms. McMandon read *A Fine Fine School* by Sharon Creech, asking students for their predictions, and pointing out some of the fun illustrations. Mrs. Myers' students enjoyed getting to know Ms. McMandon, and no, she won't make them go to school on weekends and holidays like Principal Keene from the story!



September's Art Smart: Using Your Senses With Art

This month we are teaching students to use their imagination when looking at art. Thinking about how a piece of art would feel, sound, smell, or even taste can help them understand the artist and his or her art. And it's fun! Check out the Art Smart website if you would like to learn more about this month's lesson. <http://valleyridgeacademypto.com/art/artsmart.html>



For this project, the students were asked to smell and touch mystery items and listen to sound clips and draw what each thing reminded them of. The goal is to use our senses to help us to see art from many different perspectives.



SPRIT STICKS ARE COMING!



Our first SPRIT STICK sale will be **Friday September 30** in the cafeteria during lunch.



- * \$1 per stick
 - * Nearly 100 designs to choose from!
 - * VRA Spirit Rings available for \$5 each
- Easily attach to backpacks...great for starting your Spirit Stick collection!

What's Happening In Middle School?

Stepping Up To Middle School

55 new VRA middle school students (rising 6th graders and new 7th graders to VRA) attended our first annual “Stepping Up to Middle School” camp each morning during the week of July 25 – 29.

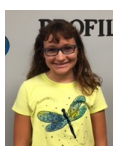
Led by Mr. Wheeler (Math and Technology) and Mrs. Romano (Language Arts), with guest appearances by Ms. Anzalda (Guidance), Ms. Frericks (Art), and Ms. Babineau (World History), the students learned all about how middle schoolers thrive at Valley Ridge Academy.



Activities included a “Get Your Locker Open!” relay race, a tour of the 2nd floor middle school halls, leadership and teamwork skills competitions, early assignment of textbooks, brain teasers and “rebus” puzzles, and a cool, science-based way to make your own ice cream.

From a rising sixth grader’s parent, “That was the best thing for my child. He is now organized and ready for 6th grade. I hope more students will participate next year.”

We look forward to next summer and the chance to welcome a new group into the coolest middle school community in St. Johns County, the VRA Hawks! *Jim Wheeler*



My First Day of VRA Middle School

By Chloe Dresback

The first day of school, dressed in a new outfit, I was ready for middle school. Even though I had attended Valley Ridge the past two years this year was different. I was walking the halls as a middle schooler, 6th grade.

My first day of middle school went just as expected! All my teachers were awesome, the transitions between classes went fairly well, and then I faced THE LOCKER! This was the most difficult part of my first day – oh who I am kidding my first week of middle school. I think most 6th graders felt this way, but we all finally conquered the dreaded LOCKER!

I was so excited to see some of my friends in the hallways, during lunch, and in my classes. I love my homeroom teacher, Mrs. Z or Mrs. Zitiello. She’s crazy, but you gotta love her! All my other teachers were excited to start a new year. Everyone was so encouraging too and helpful. It made me feel welcome to the middle school part of VRA.

Now I just have to figure out how to be to class on time with the right supplies and homework.

That’s how my first day of middle school went and I’m really looking forward to another great year here on the Ridge.

Early Act Club

Early Act is a service club for students in grades 3-8. The students work on projects to help the school, community, and world. The meetings will be the second and fourth Tuesday at 7:30am. If your student is interested in joining, please send them to Mrs. Dresback in 610 or Mrs. Sandler in villa 19 for an application. The first meeting is September 27 at 7:30am in room 610.



3rd Annual Hawk Hike Sponsored by Fishman Pediatric Dentistry



Valley Ridge Academy PTO had its annual Hawk Hike on August 20th. The Hawk Hike is a yearly event that invites the entire school and community to join in on a 1 mile fun run and 5k trail run. Dr. Fishman Pediatric Dentistry was the gracious sponsor for the event, allowing it to be full of music and laughter as the children got to do the outdoor activities such as hula hooping and a limbo competition. A special

thanks as well to Ryan Shepherd who donated the water and bananas that were freely given before the race to those in attendance. After the run, families were invited to take part of the Kona ice truck and cool off with a nice treat. This was a first look into the fun events run by the schools PTO that helps bring together community and inspires students to participate in school activities. You can find out about more events hosted by the school, become a member of the PTO, or to help in these events by visiting the PTOs website at <http://www.valleyridgeacademypto.com/>



Boo Hoo/Woo Hoo Breakfast Sponsored by Fishman Pediatric Dentistry



The PTO held a Boo Hoo/Woo Hoo Breakfast on August 15th for Kindergarten parents. After dropping off their little ones for their first full day of school, the parents came to the cafeteria and were able to enjoy some coffee, breakfast from Maple

Street Biscuit Company and meet some other parents. Whether they chose to pick up a pack of Kleenex or a party blower, everybody enjoyed the biscuits! Thank you Fishman Pediatric Dentistry for sponsoring this event!



**Spirit wear is now available for [purchase online!](#)
Store will be open Sept 9th-20th.**

MEMBERSHIP BREAKFAST

Your support and PTO membership is greatly appreciated. We are off to a wonderful start and look forward to a successful 2016-17 school year.

We welcome you to join us for a PTO membership breakfast cookoff and 1st general PTO meeting sponsored by



Date: Monday, September 19th
Time: 8:30 am
Location: VRA cafeteria

There will be information about upcoming events and opportunities to get involved. We will have our first general PTO meeting where everyone is invited to attend and members can vote. The PTO Board members will be there to answer any questions.

Haven't joined the PTO yet?
You can now join membership online on the PTO website!

We are proud to acknowledge and would like to thank our business partner Ponte Vedra Pediatric Dentistry & Orthodontics for sponsoring this event.

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Girls and Boys Volleyball Teams 2016-2017

Aubrey Bedwell
Reis Bureh
Gigi Chaon
Darby Dinger
Amelia Evans
Lizzy Klein
Natalie Lovett

lauren Marringer
Jordan Maloney
Molly Murphy
Makenna Pollock
Keyniah Riddick
Zoe Szilagyi



Liam Angst
Zach Anwar
AJ Baghalian
Aidan Barbour
Nick Bohanon

Jaxon McKim
Austin Stewart
David Ulmer
Michael Webb
Wilson Whitehead

Castillo de San Marcos National Monument

National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior



Centennial Student Artwork Contest



A SEARCH FOR THE BEST 4TH GRADE ARTIST IN ST. JOHNS COUNTY!

August 25, 2016 marks the 100 year anniversary of the National Park Service and Castillo de San Marcos wants to celebrate the Centennial by searching out the best artwork for its annual pass to the fort.

AWARD

Your artwork will be featured on the 2017 Annual Admission pass to Castillo de San Marcos National Monument.

PLUS

You will win your own 2017 Annual Pass to the Castillo. This pass allows you and 3 guests to enter the fort for free all year.

DEADLINE
09.25.16

SUBMISSIONS

All entries must be the original hard copy. Entries may be submitted in person or mailed to:

Attn: Artwork Contest
 Castillo de San Marcos NM
 1 South Castillo Drive
 St. Augustine, FL 32084
 Please include your Name, Age, School, Mailing Address, and Phone Number.

RULES

1. Artwork should reflect or depict Castillo de San Marcos National Monument.
2. Materials: Colored pencils, crayons, colored markers, pastels, paints, or pen and ink.
3. Size Restrictions: Artwork must be no larger than 16"x 20" landscape (horizontal) orientation. Annual pass is much smaller (about the size of a credit card).
4. Contestants: Must be in 4th grade in St. Johns County. Only 1 submission per student.

JUDGING CRITERIA

Artwork will be judged on uniqueness, quality, and overall impression. Impartial members of the park staff will choose winning design.

MORE INFO

Contact Amelia Vela, Education Coordinator, at amelia_vela@nps.gov or call (904) 829-6506.

Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Essay Contest

The St. Johns Education Association is proud to promote the Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Holiday and celebration activities in St. Johns County!



Essay Guidelines:

2015-2016 TOPIC FOR THE ESSAY CONTEST: "The time is always right to do the right thing!"
 The essay contest is designed to create awareness among students in grades 4 -12 of the efforts by Dr. King. Students should write about how "the time is always right to do the right thing." As we prepare to celebrate the Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. National Holiday on January 18, 2016, we believe this essay contest will encourage students to think beyond the dream and plan for the future.

Eligibility:

Three categories: Students in grades 4-5; Grades 6-8, and Grades 9-12

Criteria:

The essay must be typed or handwritten in ink by the student (exception - students with special accommodations). A cover sheet containing the name of the participant, complete home address, school, grade, teacher, and telephone number must accompany the essay. Use word count to include the number of words on your cover sheet.

The writing should be focused, on topic, have a logical, organized pattern; and have ample development of supporting ideas using a mature command of the language for appropriate grade level. The essay must be the student's original work.

Teachers, please send the top 4 essays from each class to SJEA by Wednesday, January 6th, 2016. You may send the essays via inter-office mail, regular mail, or drop them off at our office (see address below). SJEA will choose the top four semi-finalists from each class to determine the overall winners in each category.

Length of Essay

Students in Grades 4 – 5: 200 - 400 words with bibliography (if applicable)
 Students in Grades 6 – 8: 400 - 600 words with bibliography (if applicable)
 Students in Grades 9 – 12: 600 - 800 words with bibliography (if applicable)

Prizes include gift cards to Barnes and Noble in the following amounts:

	4 th -5 th Grade	6 th -8 th Grade	9 th -12 th Grade
First Place:	\$40.00	\$50.00	\$75.00
Second Place:	\$30.00	\$30.00	\$50.00
Third Place:	\$20.00	\$20.00	\$25.00

Send essays directly to the SJEA office: 1333 S Dixie Hwy, Ste 4, Saint Augustine, FL 32084

Deadlines: Essays must be turned into SJEA on or before January 6, 2016.

Special Note:

Winners in each category will be notified and invited to attend our MLK Essay and Poster ceremony. All winners will receive their prizes at the program. It will be held on January 14th 2016, at 6:30 p.m., in the school board auditorium at 40 Orange Street.



We Want to Find Some Very Special Children

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- Understanding
- Moving or playing
- Seeing or hearing
- Getting along with other children
- Learning and paying attention
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- Information about community programs for children with special needs
- Professional consultation for parents
- Screening in the areas of communication, motor development, vision, hearing, and preschool readiness skills
- Assistance in placing children with special needs in appropriate exceptional student education programs or other early intervention services

If you have questions or concerns about a child
 Birth - 5 years of age, contact:

FDLRS/NEFEC CHILD FIND
(386) 329-3811 or Toll Free 1-800-227-6036



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 The Florida School for the Deaf and Blind

21st Annual Ancient City Kids Day St. Augustine, FL – Attention Parents!

Looking for something fun to do with your kids that doesn't cost a lot of money? Then mark your calendars for the 21st Annual Ancient City Kids Day! Ancient City Kids Day will be held on **Saturday, October 22, 2016 from 11am-3pm** at Francis Field on Castillo Drive.

This event, coordinated by local agencies, is a day of fun-filled activities for children and families. The event is free for the public, and will include over 40 youth service agencies offering carnival style games and activities, arts and crafts, and contests for the kids plus live entertainment all day! No child will leave empty-handed as t-shirts, prizes or goodies are given out all day. Educational information on resources in our community is available for parents. The only cost to the public will be for food or drinks. Ancient City Kids Day has grown to be one of St. Augustine's largest youth activities, and is a popular event for the whole family.

For more information, please call (904) 829-2273 or visit <http://augustine.com/event/ancient-city-kids-day>

"21st Annual Ancient City Kid Day"

EPIC Behavioral Healthcare
 1400 Old Dixie Highway
 St. Augustine, FL 32084
 (904) 829-2273

Contact: Teresa Andrews



ESE PARENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE

St Johns County School District (SJCS), UF Center for Autism and Related Disabilities at Jacksonville (CARD) and UF Florida Diagnostic Learning Resource System Jacksonville (FDLRS-MDC) offer

Topic: SIBSHOPS: AN OVERVIEW OF A LIVELY PEER SUPPORT GROUP CREATED SPECIFICALLY FOR THE BROTHERS AND SISTERS OF CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES

Date/Time: 10/4/16 from 6:00 pm – 7:30 pm

Location: 40 Orange Street, St. Augustine, FL, 32084

WHAT ARE SIBSHOPS: Sibshops are lively and rewarding events/activities where siblings, ages 8 to 13, of students with disabilities will meet other sibs, have fun, laugh, talk about the facets of having a sib with special needs, play some great games, learn something about the services their brothers and sisters receive, and have some more fun.

TAKE AWAY:

1. Families will obtain an understanding of what Sibshops have to offer for the family member who will have the longest-lasting relationship with a person who has a disability
2. Families will find out how to register for upcoming Sibshops in St Johns County.

Target Audience:

Parents of students with disabilities
 Teachers of students with disabilities
 Siblings of students with disabilities age 8 to 13.

The purpose of the committee is to provide input to district staff regarding our ongoing effort to continuously improve services for students with disabilities.

Parents, Educators, Administrators, & Business Representatives are invited and encouraged to attend.

St. Johns County School District
 Exceptional Student Education Department
 40 Orange Street, St. Augustine, FL 32084
 (904) 547-7672

Featured Partner of the Month

**Fishman Pediatric Dentistry**

Our office takes very seriously the role of providing dental care and knowledge to families in our area. Dr. Fishman has provided dental care to children in our community since 2009. As a Board Certified Pediatric Dentist, Dr. Fishman has the knowledge and ability to provide your child with the highest level of dental care. Our office places an emphasis on prevention and providing an optimal level of dental healthcare for infants, children, adolescents, and persons with special health care needs.

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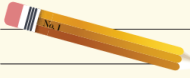
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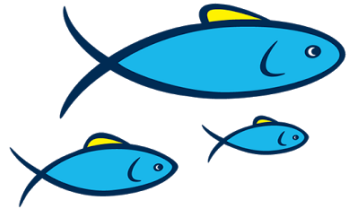
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