



THE HAWKS NEST

March 2021

VALLEY RIDGE ACADEMY

Letter from our Principal

Hello VRA Families,

March has come and gone and what a busy month it was here at VRA. I hope everyone enjoyed Spring Break and found it to be restful and relaxing. This past month was very exciting at VRA to include basketball games, spring photos, the Spring Book Fair, and outdoor band concerts. It has been wonderful to begin to have a couple of events return to school while still adhering to all health and safety requirements that have been put in place this school year. As the calendar turns to April and May, we look forward to hosting the National Junior Honor Society Induction and additional VRA Band performances to celebrate these students and recognize their hard work in their respective crafts.

Please make note that there will be no school on April 2nd as it is a student/teacher holiday, and that April 9th is a teacher workday/student holiday. With the 3rd quarter ending on April 8th, the teacher workday allows our faculty to close out grades and prepare for report cards to be available on April 19th.

April is also the beginning of the District and State formalized testing season. The VRA testing calendar can be found on the VRA website under the Testing tab. I would like to stress how important it is that students are present and arrive to school on time and ready to do their best. If you have any questions on the testing calendar, please reach out to VRA Testing Coordinator, Holly Nover, at Holly.Nover@stjohns.k12.fl.us.

Have a great weekend!

Sandra McMandon



THE HAWKS NEST

March 2021

In this issue:

1. Letter from our Principal
2. Welcome Ms. Hallett!
3. Staff Celebrations
4. Character Counts! Celebrations
5. Safety Patrol Recognitions
6. SSYR Awards
7. Valley Ridge Reader
8. Heart Challenges
9. Basketball & Cheer
10. Read-A-Thon
11. The Kinder Garden
12. Band Concerts
13. Cool Science— Ft. Ms. Marsh's Class
14. Cool Science— Ft. Ms. Scarpa + Ms. Shirley's Classes
15. Fun at School — Ft. Ms. Kovacs' Class
16. Fun at School — Ft. Ms. Corrigan's Class
17. Elementary Art Room
18. eSchoolPLUS app
19. Summer Basketball Camp @ Nease
20. New Student Registration

Welcome Ms. Hallett!

We're incredibly fortunate to have Ms. Sarah Hallett join us as our new School Counselor for grades Kindergarten through 4th grade.

Welcome to the VRA Family!



Staff Celebrations

HAPPY MARCH BIRTHDAYS!

4th — Lauren Woods
9th — Yadelis Salas Maluenga
12th — Kayla Lockwood
13th — Jana Rice
20th — Holly Nover
21st - Sandra Hood
25th — Melissa Whitehead
27th — Aletha Dresback
28th — Erica MacNaught
28th — Tayri Lugones
31st — Kathleen Schab
31st — Marcia Concepcion Aguila

HAPPY 5TH ANNIVERSARY!

The Schoolfields celebrated their 5th anniversary on March 19th

Congratulations!



Character Counts! Celebrations



K-8 classrooms/homerooms celebrated Character Counts! on Friday, March 29th. One student from each class was nominated for demonstrating the pillar of



Be honest • Keep your promises • Be reliable — do what you say you'll do • Be loyal — stand by your family, friends, and country

Each nominee received a certificate, VRA magnet, and a bag full of fun rewards!

We are so proud of our kids of character!

Kindergarten —

Maiya Shade, Liam McCallion, Talia Battista, John Mullane, Aanvi Warekar, Jax Tedone, and Morgan Dunn.

First grade —

Emmeline Ostrander, Trevor Knox, Caroline Clark, Emma MacDonald, Piper Hamilton, Hanae Nagata, and Carson Stark.

Second grade -

Kyler Kaufman, Abigail Belizaire, James Dubocq, Kelsey Emilio, Evan Rubottom, Maya Lavalley, Crystal Luna Taylor, and Caden Thompson.

Third grade —

Richard Davidson, Sophia Naranjo, Rowynn Leland, Justin Edele, Avery Fickling, Christopher (CJ) Thigpen, and Mae Harry.

Fourth grade —

Skyler Wildman, Hope Lang, Reid Presuler, Brody Holgrimson, Hanna Mason, Lucy Davis, and Ethan Goldstein.

Fifth grade —

Grant Negron, Hudson Picklesimer, Joshua Noboa, Donovan Shanks, Natasha Nichols, Jake Lamanna, and Mikah Buntz.

Middle School —

Madison Swallow, Piper Crecco, Alex Young, Nicholas Moose, Cliff Hill, Stephen Cuellar, Fernando Perez, Emma Reeder, and Donavon Beatty.



VRA Students of Character



We applaud you!

VRA Students of Character

Well done, Hawks!



Safety Patrol Recognitions

Valley Ridge Safety Patrols are excited to be back on the job! These student leaders help make sure our school is a safe, orderly, friendly place to learn. Our 5th grade patrols started monitoring our hallways and walkways, greeting students and staff and politely reminding students of school rules on February 8th.



All of our patrols were selected through an application process to ensure that they are good students with great character. In addition to exemplifying the pillars of character, our patrols strive to follow the patrol pledge:

- Practice good character.
- Assist others so they are safe.
- Treat others with respect.
- Report to duty on time.
- Obey safety rules.
- Lead by example.

We are extremely proud of all our patrols, but want to recognize the students who have been selected to serve in the role of captain. Our captains are responsible for taking attendance, leading our patrols in the pledge of allegiance and our patrol pledge, and checking to ensure all patrols are meeting expectations.



Finn Bayliss
Sierra Lavallee
Braelyn McGarvey
Tegan Rothwell
Donovan Markle
Sierra Whitlow
Jenna Troyer
Catherine Wetzell



Sunshine State Young Readers Awards

The SSYRA Program is a statewide reading motivational program for students in grades 3rd-8th. The purpose of the SSYRA Program is to encourage students to read independently for personal satisfaction, based on interest rather than reading level.

Each year students are challenged to read books from the Sunshine State Reader list, for a total of 15 books.

VRA rewards readers in grades 3rd-8th with Brag Tags for each book read. Students who read all 15 books are declared Winners of the SSRYA Awards.

These awesome students will enjoy ice cream treats from:



They will also receive the ultimate Brag Tag to add to their collection:

I READ THEM ALL!



For the month of March,
Congratulations go to:

BRIDGET WALKER AND MADISON PEREZ



Valley Ridge Reader

VRA Parents and Caregivers,

We invite you to explore the wonderful monthly publication from our Media Center,

THE VALLEY RIDGE READER

Follow this link to discover the March issue:

<https://www.smores.com/g7j9s>



Heart Challenges



During the months of March and April, we will be participating in both the Kids Heart Challenge (K-5th), and for the 1st time at VRA, the American Heart Challenge (6th – 8th). Organized and facilitated by Coach Mahaven, these programs are an excellent opportunity for students to learn more about staying physically, mentally, and emotionally healthy! More detailed information will be coming soon.

VRA Basketball and Cheer

Congratulations to the **VRA GIRLS AND BOYS BASKETBALL** teams for another great season. Even during a season with some unique challenges due to increased health and safety protocols, both teams, approached each game with a competitive drive and excellent sportsmanship. The students represented VRA and what it means to be a Hawk exceedingly well and we are very proud of each one of them.

The same sentiment is extended to the **VRA CHEERLEADERS** who will be competing at the National tournament in Orlando on April 24th! Our cheer athletes work and practice diligently to make sure they are in top form when competing and when representing the school out in the community. We wish them the best of luck in Orlando!

Congratulations Hawks!



VRA Read-A-Thon

MARK YOUR CALENDARS FOR OUR VRA READ-A-THON!

This year, we are excited to announce that we will hold a Read-a-thon fundraiser. Our Read-a-thon is a program that brings students together with family and friends to encourage reading and to build literacy skills. The main focus of the Read-a-thon is

for everyone to know we are committed to improving reading skills. To that end, the Read-a-thon promises to be a fun, exciting journey for all participants as they begin a personal Reading Adventure that challenges each reader to complete 10 reading sessions over our 2-week event. Our Read-a-thon will start April 5, 2021 and last

until April 18th, 2021. Click below for more information and look for a flyer to come home soon. Check out all the Media Center news at:
<https://www-vra.stjohns.k12.fl.us/media/media-center-news/>



VRA Read-A-Thon



Welcome Parents, Students and Friends to our Read-a-thon!

This year, we are excited to announce that we will hold a Read-a-thon fundraiser. Our Read-a-thon is a program that brings students together with family and friends to encourage reading and to build literacy skills.

The main focus of the Read-a-thon is for everyone to know we are committed to improving reading skills. To that end, the Read-a-thon promises to be a fun, exciting journey for all participants as they begin a personal Reading Adventure that challenges each reader to complete 10 reading sessions over our 2-week event.

Our Read-a-thon will start April 5, 2021.

Approximately 1 week before we start our first reading session we will send home paperwork with your reader explaining how you will activate their personal Read-a-thon page.

You will know that we have distributed the take home sheet because we will also place a Read-a-thon sticker on your child as a reminder.

We understand that, as parents, you have high expectations for the quality of your child's education but also have limited time.

That's why we chose to hold a Read-a-thon.

You will find this to be the easiest fundraiser possible. By simply activating your reader's personal page and using the promotional tools found there, friends and family anywhere in the world can show their support for your reader by making a donation to our Read-a-thon.

Your involvement in the Read-a-thon will help your child develop a lasting love of reading.

We hope each one of you will activate your child's personal page the day your child brings home their paperwork. Hopefully they will be wearing their sticker as well.

Valley Ridge Academy Media Center

The Kinder Garden

Acknowledgements and thanks to Mrs. Davis for letting us maintain the school garden this year. Thanks to Mr. Vega and Mr. Wilson for filling up our rain barrel, and Mrs. Kicsak for entrusting me to guide her class in this fabulous learning experience. We have tied the learning to science, community skills and social studies and even been able to use our produce in cooking! Thanks to all the paraprofessionals and students that have participated in working in the garden.



The Kinder Garden

We have been spending many weeks working on our school garden. The work includes wearing gloves and using garden tools like the trowels, shovels, and rakes in preparing the raised beds, weeding, watering, composting, planting, harvesting, pruning, digging, and raking. All our plants have not succeeded – the potatoes were left in their pots too long before planting and did not establish.

Our first crops were cauliflower and broccoli. Did you know that broccoli produce pretty, yellow flowers? We picked some and decorated the fence one day. We used the broccoli to create a broccoli cheddar casserole – which we all tasted. Amazing to have students grow a vegetable and then use it in a dish! Next, we were able to begin harvesting kale and Swiss chard. Many students chose to take one of these to eat at home. Both can be included in a salad or cooked. It's a great way to be healthy and eat your (very fresh) greens! I have been eating a lot more veggies!



The Kinder Garden

We are waiting for our Brussel sprouts to mature and actually sprout- hopefully only a few more weeks. We are also waiting for the recently planted varieties of lettuce, tomatoes, eggplant, yellow peppers, strawberries, and sugar snap peas to grow and develop their flowers and then produce fruit.

In the meantime, we have several herbs growing in the taller raised beds. These include parsley, chives, oregano, rosemary, and peppermint. We all like to take a fresh peppermint leaf and eat it. It is refreshing and a natural mouth freshener. To add a bit of color, we planted different-colored pansies and an ornamental cabbage.

Hope you all can visit our garden and see how hard work pays off.



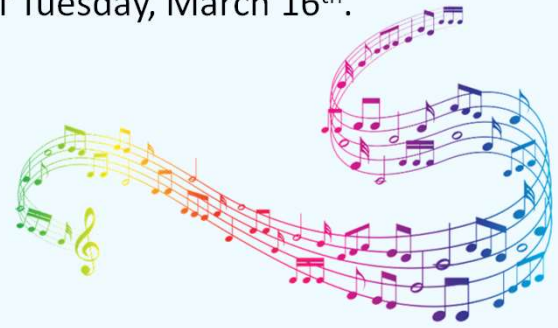
Ms. Alison Caraher – Paraprofessional ESE



Band Concerts

Beginning Band

Our sixth graders seized their opportunity to charm an audience of 2nd grade students during the morning of Tuesday, March 16th.



Concert Band, Symphonic Band, and Jazz Band

Our 7th and 8th graders delighted an audience of family members with three wonderful performances conducted during the evening of Tuesday, March 23rd.

Thanks go to Mr. Burk and these Hawks for bringing music to VRA!



Upcoming Events

5/22 @ 10:00 am – Spring Concert.

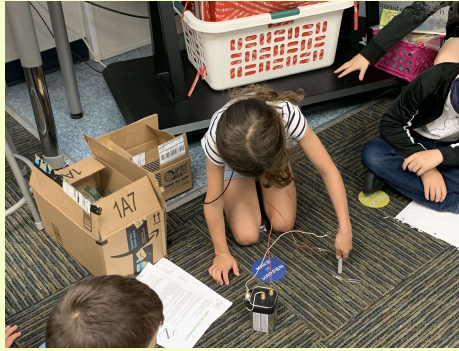
6/3 @ 6:00 pm – Band Awards.

Cool Science – Ft. Ms. Marsh's Class

Here's a snapshot of my student Victoria Dubocq showing how to make an **ELECTROMAGNET**.

We were working on writing procedures. We decided to have a "Show and Tell" on how to do or make something. She not only successfully showed us how to make the magnet but provided supplies for all her classmates to make one at home! It was great!

Ms. Marsh – 2nd grade



Cool Science – Ft. Ms. Scarpa and Ms. Shirley's Classes

All 7th grade science students are working very hard on their integrated **DRAGON GENETICS PROJECT**.

We are about halfway through and working towards who will survive. Then the survivors run for president of Earthgon in their civics classes. Let the competition begin!!

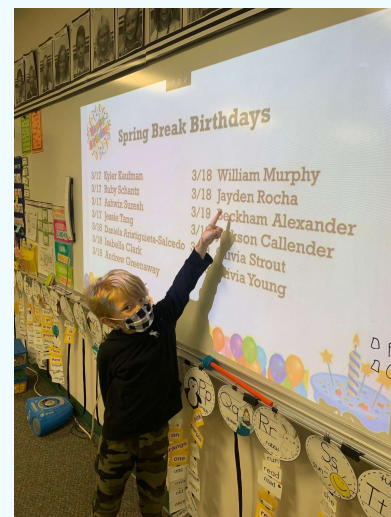
Ms. Scarpa and Ms. Shirley

Fun at School – Ft. Ms. Kovacs' Class

Kids Heart Challenge



Birthday celebrations

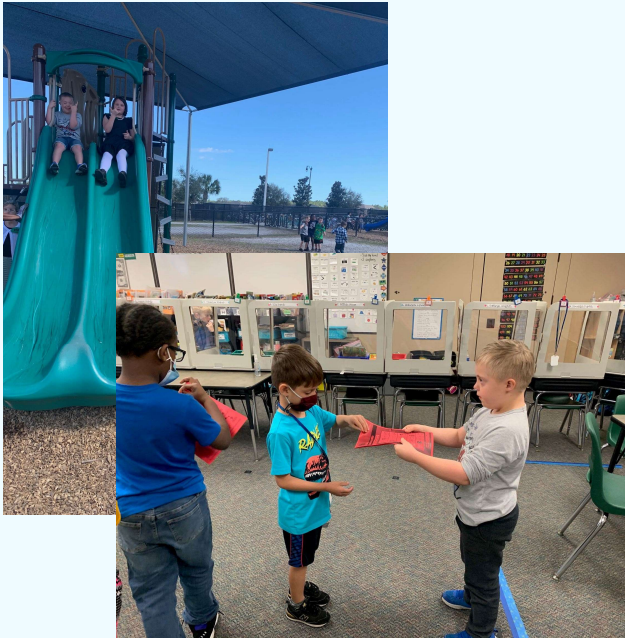


Fun at School – Ft. Ms. Kovacs' Class

The VRA way



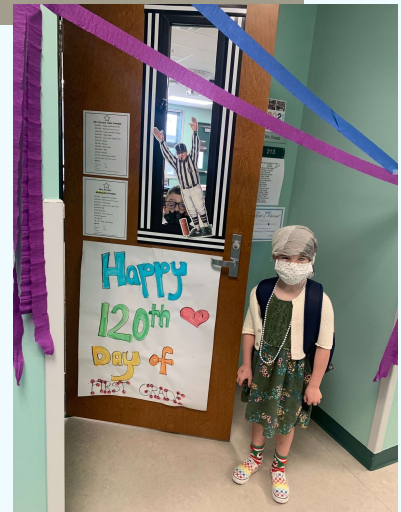
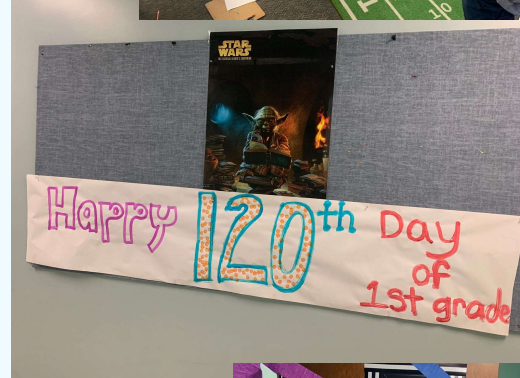
Good citizens



Character Counts! Trustworthiness



120th Day of School

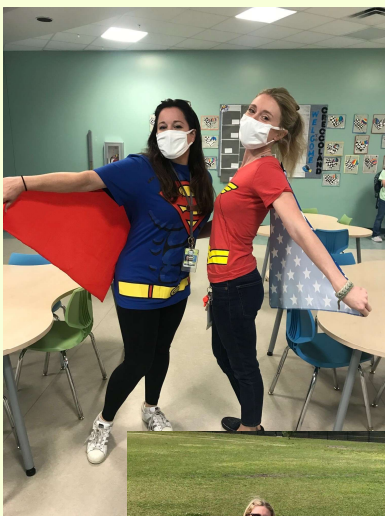


Fun at School – Ft. Ms. Corrigan's Class

Goodbye Ms. Dail



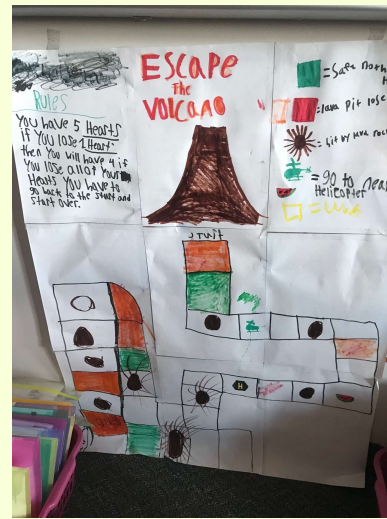
Ms. Crecco and Ms. Corrigan superheroes



Recess art club!



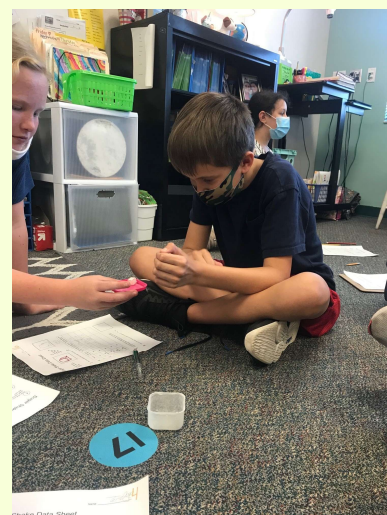
Creating our own math games



Rock cycle lab!



Sugar Shake Lab - Weathering and erosion



Fun at School – Ft. Ms. Corrigan's Class

Ramen Noodle Reward! Dehydrated food coming back to life with hot water...just like the astronauts!



Tucker's ducks, Bill and Vanilla, fly to school for a visit!



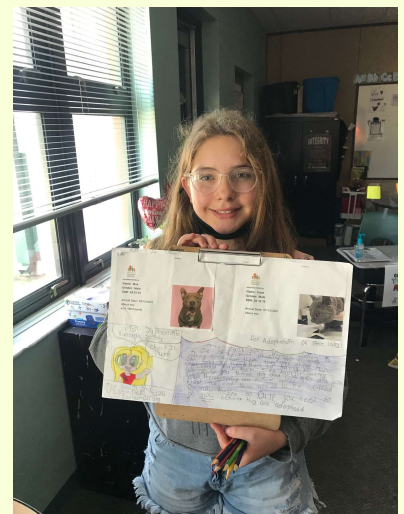
Girls' lunch!



Puzzle during Friday Free Choice



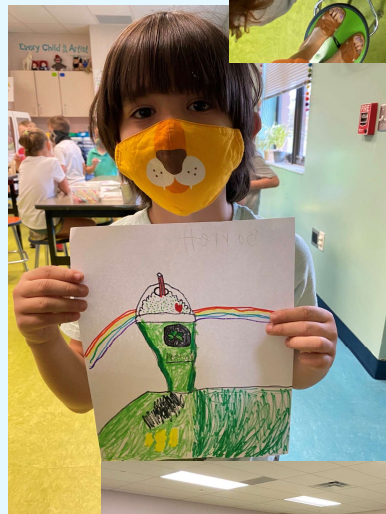
Rylie's Animal Adoption Poster! persuasion writing in action in our community!



Elementary Art Room

SPRING ART ROOM HAPPENINGS

Our Elementary Art classes have been hard at work finishing several creative projects.



Elementary Art Room



To see **MORE GREAT VRA STUDENT ART** please follow me on Instagram @hello.hue and make sure you have your students **ARTSONIA** account activated - you can get this from their Art Teacher.



This is the world's largest online Student Art Gallery and a great place to see your student's virtual art portfolio and purchase thoughtful, unique, and custom gifts for family and friends with your child's artwork professionally printed on them.

Proceeds from the sales of these items come directly back to the VRA Arts Department to help purchase much needed art supplies for this school year.

Thank you for supporting the ARTS at VRA!

Stay Well!

X *Mauer*

The healing power of Art - Creative activities can relieve stress, aid communication, and help arrest cognitive decline.

eSchoolPLUS Family App



Parents/Guardians,

The St. Johns County School District (SJCSD) has recently implemented the eSchoolPLUS Family Mobile App for parents/guardians. This mobile app allows parents to see many of the Home Access Center (HAC) features from their mobile phone. This application uses the same login credentials as Home Access Center (HAC).

Here is what the eSchoolPlus Family app looks like in the app store (Apple or Google):



eSchoolPLUS Family

PowerSchool Group LLC Education

Everyone

Add to Wishlist

- Student grades
- Attendance
- Assignments
- Report Card and Progress Reports
- Schedule
- Transportation
- Notifications

In addition, we discovered that some parents were using other untrusted 3rd party mobile apps to provide similar data pulled from our system by providing them with their personal HAC credentials. This can be dangerous because, the District has no connection or affiliation with these other vendor apps. By providing them with your credentials, you have granted them access to your child's personal academic data. If this is the case, we recommend you remove the 3rd party app from your phone and then change your password in HAC. Then download and use the new eSchoolPLUS Family app (shown above).

Here are some of the key academic areas displayed by this mobile app:

Summer Basketball Camp @ Nease



Bailen Basketball **Summer Basketball Camp** **@ Nease High School**

Boys and Girls Head Coaches
Sherri Anthony & Josh Bailen
Boys and Girls entering 4th - 9th Grade
Monday– Friday Time: 9am - 12pm

Session 1 6/14-6/18

Session 2 6/21-6/25

Session 3 6/28-7/2

Session 4 7/5-7/9

Session 5 7/12-7/16

Session 6 7/19-7/23

To Register Visit:

www.joshbailenbasketball.com
Or Venmo Josh-BailenBasketball
Cost: \$150.00 Per Session



Coach Bailen's Basketball camps is the place for fundamental basketball teaching and fun! Successfully hosting hundreds of kids in the community every summer over the last 10 years!

The camp director is Nease Head Boys Basketball Coach Josh Bailen. Josh Bailen played High school basketball at Nease graduating in 2006, Played 4 years of NCAA DIII basketball at Ripon College, WI. For legendary Coach Bob Gillespie. Coach Bailen coached at the NCAA DI level as a Graduate Assistant at Jacksonville University under Cliff Warren from 2010-2012.

The camp is coed and players will be grouped according to both age and skill level. It is highly instructional so that both experienced and inexperienced players will both benefit from the camp. Emphasis is placed on individual skill development and the understanding of team offensive and defensive concepts in a fun, competitive environment. Camp staff will consist of former and current high school coaches and current and former high school and college players.

Leadership & Character Development:

Developing young athletes into leaders on their team and in their community.

Some of the most important lessons in life can be learned through the game of basketball. How individuals respond to adversity and obstacles is where true character is revealed. We believe in instilling qualities in our players that help them succeed not only on the court but in life. We choose to lead by example and never allow the intensity of the game diminish that standard. We believe in building character and leadership traits in our players not only maximizes our success on the court but in life, long after our playing days are over.

Summer Basketball Camp @ Nease



Facility –The Panther Den is an air-conditioned gym with 6 glass backboards with breakaway rims. Campers will have access to state of the art training equipment and automatic shooting machine, restrooms, water, and camp store.

Camp Outline and Highlights

Fundamental Skill Development Stations

Small Group Skill stations are our primary focus of the camp. We approach fundamental skill development with passion and enthusiasm! Coaches will teach the campers that game speed repetition and attention to detail is the key to improving skills. Our stations include a variety of passing, shooting, ball handling, defensive drills. We TEACH the fundamentals of the game. Our coaches differentiate our instruction to the individual needs of each camper.

Competitions & 1/2 Court Games

1 on 1, 2on2, and 3 on 3 Tournaments. Hot Shot/ Shooting contests, and more! Campers earn prizes and championships in our daily contests and games.

Live Full Court Play

We apply the fundamentals that we teach in our stations to the live action. Campers are grouped according to age and skill level.

Campers must bring: Basketball shoes, shorts, t-shirt, water bottle, and any other necessary personal items. Money for the camp store is recommended (pizza, hot dogs, snacks, Gatorade, water)

Each Camper will receive a T-Shirt, Prizes, as well as an individualized report card with specific feedback for their individual development!

New Student Registration



New Student Registration Open 2021-2022 School Year

<https://www.stjohns.k12.fl.us/student/enrollment/>



Kindergarten and new students register early!

Voluntary Pre-K: A child must be four years old on or before September 1st.

Kindergarten: A child must be five years old on or before September 1st.

First Grade: A child must be six years old on or before September 1st **AND** satisfy one of the following:

- a) Satisfactory completion of kindergarten in a Florida public school.
- b) Satisfactory completion of kindergarten in a non-public school.
- c) Previous attendance in an out-of-state school in which the student was admitted on the basis of age requirements established by the state of residency.

Registration Requirements:

- Proof of Residency.
- Proof of Immunization.
- Copy of Birth Certificate.
- Physical/Health Exam within 12 months of enrollment.

