



THE HAWKS NEST

April 2021

VALLEY RIDGE ACADEMY

Letter from our Principal

Hello VRA Families,

Thank you to everyone who went out of their way to recognize our teachers and staff during this past week. The Valley Ridge Academy teachers are some of the best in St. Johns County and they truly care about their students. It was very rewarding to see the VRA PTO and the VRA community acknowledge and thank them for everything they do day in and day out to ensure our students are safe, cared for, and provided a rigorous education. A great deal has been put on their plates during this past school year. They have asked to plan and teach in ways they never had to prior, and they have risen to the occasion. It has been my great pleasure to work alongside such dedicated and consummate professionals during the past 5 years.

This is my final newsletter entry as principal of Valley Ridge Academy. The past 5 years have been incredibly special and will always stay with me. The relationships that have been built, the accomplishments of the students, staff and community, and the culture that we have worked together to foster will all last far into the future. I want to take a moment to thank the VRA community for the faith, trust and support that was placed in me each day. I did my best to honor the responsibility of nurturing and educating the students at this extraordinary school and leave proud of the work we accomplished together. It is reassuring to know that the incoming principal, Ms. Angie Fuller, will step in and continue to guide the school to new heights.

Please join me in welcoming Ms. Angie Fuller to Valley Ridge Academy. Coming from Durbin Creek Elementary, Ms. Fuller is an accomplished and devoted administrator who always puts kids first. She will be reaching out to the community soon to formally introduce herself, and I know that VRA will continue to excel under her leadership.

Go Hawks!

Sandra McMandon



THE HAWKS NEST

April 2021

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Meet Bob!!!

BOB is VRA's new character monster, who is always encouraging us to Be Our Best!! BOB has been busy visiting with students in classrooms, hanging out in Mrs. Hallett's office window to watch students as they walk by, and rewarding students for displaying excellent character at school!



Staff Celebrations

HAPPY APRIL BIRTHDAYS!

2nd - Alison Caraher
2nd - Andres Vega
3rd - Kimberly Aitchison
5th - Ashley Mahaven
5th - Dana Klabacka
13th - Ingrid Jones
15th - Barbara Kearney
17th - Kristin Troyer
20th - Brooke Reynolds
22nd - Lori Butler
27th - Asha Folmsbee
30th - Anne Pounder

HAPPY MAY BIRTHDAYS!

6th - Troy Wilson
8th - Angelica Gonzalez Figueredo
13th - Linda Goodwin
14th - Kristee Burgess
18th - Kathy Shirley
20th - Jennifer Pulgarin Salazar
22nd - Eday Lobo Gonzalez
22nd - Danielle Kicksak
23rd - Kelly Emillio
24th - Haley Alvarado

HAPPY BIRTHDAY



National Junior Honor Society

VRA's chapter of the National Junior Honor Society held its induction ceremony on April 6th.

*Congratulations to the new
NJHS members!*

INDUCTEES:

Madison Adair, Erin Barte, Alec Becker, Alannah Bertram, Sayan Bhattacharya, Srija Bhattacharya, Jaedon Fiesta, Charlotte Garcia, Bianca Garg, Gabriela Guevara, Eric Herbst, Samantha Ingenito, Sanjana Kamalraj, Emma Nordness, Matthew Ostrander, Malana Patel, Jaden Price, Dylan Rhoad, Tyler Rohrer, Kleo Rrodastani, Morgan Shreve, Pablo Solis, Sam Thornton, Bailey Tokarek, Raquel Vega, and Kara Yeaton.

Mrs. Bostic and Mrs. Dresback would also like to thank current NJHS officers for their service and leadership – particularly with the ceremony.

You did a great job!

2020–2021 OFFICERS:

President:	Shelby Alessandria
Vice- President:	Mason Garcia
Treasurer:	Anatoli Monsalve
Secretary:	Lauren Hughes



Valley Ridge Reader

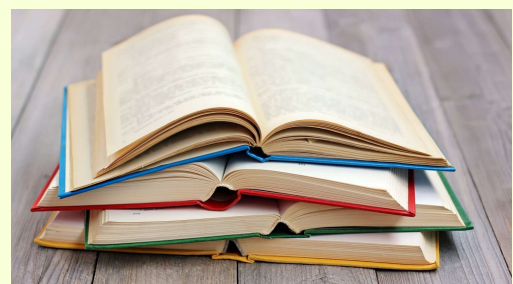
VRA Parents and Caregivers,

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

THE VALLEY RIDGE READER

Follow this link to discover the April issue:

<https://www.smores.com/nah2y>



All County MS Art Competition

Congratulations Hawks!!!



Congratulations to our VRA Finalists

From left to right:

8th graders - Addie Scaff, Taylor Willis, and Harmony Anderson



All County MS Art Competition

Congratulations Hawks!!!



Congratulations to our VRA Finalists

From left to right:

7th graders - Raquel Vega, Olivia Strout, Lily Hohner, and Roxy Sibel



Kids/American Heart Challenge



American Heart Association.

KIDS
HEART
CHALLENGE™ | **AMERICAN**
HEART
CHALLENGE™

We are so proud of each of our students! Our Kids Heart Challenge and American Heart Challenge Event was a HUGE success- in fact, OUR Greatest KHC event to date! The students had a blast keeping their own hearts healthy while participating in Coach Mahaven's warrior course. They also helped share heart healthy tips to others in our community. Thank you for helping us reach and exceed our school goal and fund lifesaving research for the American Heart Association and earn funds for our P.E. program! Way to go Heart Hero HAWKS!



American
Heart
Association.



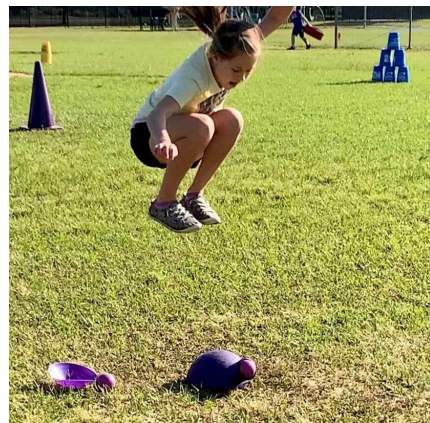
**THANK
YOU!**

Our school's Kids Heart Challenge
event was a HUGE success!



KIDS
HEART
CHALLENGE™

Kids/American Heart Challenge



Kids/American Heart Challenge



Ms. Marsh's 2nd grade Class

Earth Day Recycled Fashion Show!



Ms. Noren's 5th grade Class

Our class in front of our beautiful Sunflower artwork.



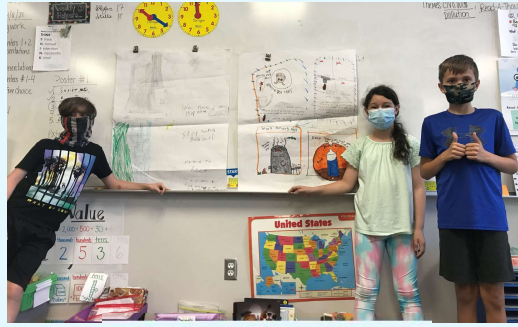
From the Clinic

As we near the end of the school year, I would like to remind you to stop by the clinic to pick up your child's medication. School policy does not allow for medication to remain in the school over the summer. It will be important for you to make arrangements to pick up your child's medication since medications may not go home with the student. Any medication left in the clinic after Friday, June 11th at 11:00 a.m. will be discarded according to policy. If you have any questions or need to make arrangements to pick up medication, please contact the school clinic at 547-4104 or by email at Kimberly.poli@stjohns.k12.fl.us.

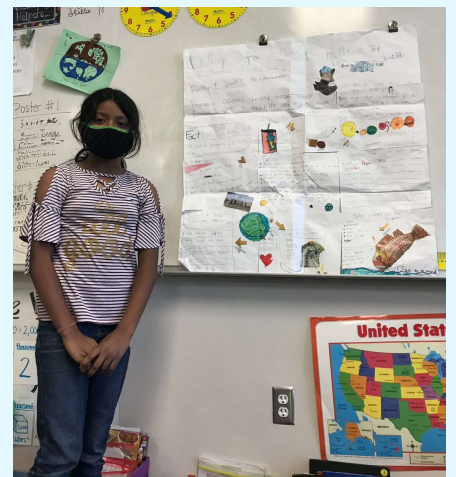
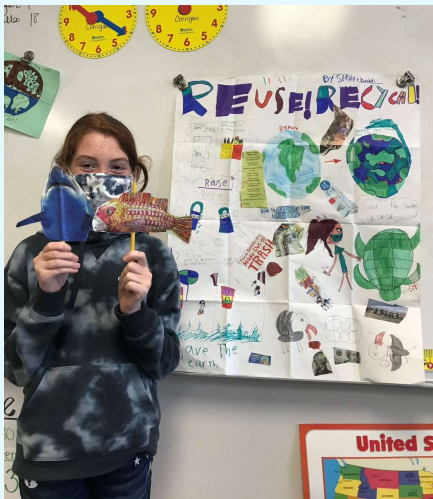


Ms. Corrigan's 4th grade Class

During the month of April, Ms. Corrigan's class studied the affects that different types of pollution have on our local and global ecosystems. We read articles from numerous



sources in order to create presentations that include persuasive essays on pollution topics! Our 4th grade class has become "Earth and Water Protectors"!



Ms. Myers' 2nd grade Class



Here are some pictures of my class celebrating Earth Day!

The first is in their recycled fashion show outfits, and the 2nd is our finished product from our virtual Earth Day Art Smart Lesson with Mrs. Swanson.



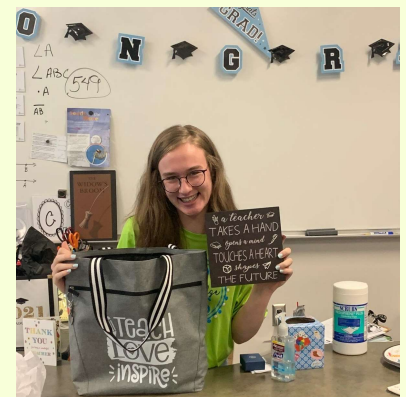
Ms. Pounder's 4th grade Class

On Friday, April 16th, Mrs. Pounder's 4th grade class said farewell to their wonderful intern! **MS. RACHEL PADGETT** spent four months with our class learning, growing and practicing what she learned in her teacher preparation program! On Saturday, April 17th she graduated from the University of North Florida with a degree in elementary education.

We celebrated her accomplishment with a little graduation party. The students all signed Ms. Padgett's cap, so that they would be "with her" during her graduation ceremony. Our generous parents gave Ms. Padgett a lovely gift that included the books she will need for her first weeks of school. The students also created a book with advice for Ms. Padgett as she begins teaching in her own classroom.

Our class was so lucky to have a passionate, caring intern like Ms. Padgett! It was great to have two teachers in the room. She did an amazing job providing our students with rigorous, engaging lessons to help prepare them for 5th grade and beyond.

Helping prepare future teachers is a big responsibility! Mrs. Pounder's students did an excellent job helping to train our intern! Now she is off to change the world!



Positive Start Program



St. Johns County + Positive + Start Program

Math is fun, but it can also be challenging.

The + Positive + Start Program enables students to practice the prerequisite math skills needed to be successful in the mathematics course in which they are enrolled in the next school year. Completion of the course will likely give students a positive start in math.

Please visit <https://www.stjohns.k12.fl.us/smath/positive-start-program/faq/> for important Frequently Asked Questions regarding the program.

The + Positive + Start Program supports the prerequisite skills needed for the mathematics courses below:

Mathematics Course	Prerequisite Mathematics Skills Review Khan Academy Units Assigned	khanacademy.org/join
Grade Six Mathematics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Get ready for ratios, rates, and percentages Get ready for arithmetic operations Get ready for negative numbers Get ready for equations, expressions, and inequalities Get ready for geometry 	Code: ANDRKGEH
Grade Seven Mathematics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Get ready for negative number operations Get ready for fractions, decimals, & percentages Get ready for rates & proportional relationships Get ready for expressions, equations, & inequalities Get ready for geometry Get ready for statistics & probability 	Code: 5S2J63BQ
Grade Eight Mathematics: Pre-Algebra	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Get ready for numbers and operations Get ready for solving equations and systems of equations Get ready for linear equations and functions Get ready for geometry 	Code: MWWFFWAU
Algebra 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Get ready for equations & inequalities Get ready for working with units Get ready for linear relationships Get ready for functions & sequences Get ready for exponents, radicals, & irrational numbers Get ready for quadratics 	Code: A7ZENQUK
Geometry	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Get ready for congruence, similarity, and triangle trigonometry Get ready for analytic geometry Get ready for conic sections Get ready for circles and solid geometry 	Code: 7YUVHHDG
Algebra 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Get ready for polynomial operations and complex numbers Get ready for equations Get ready for transformations of functions and modeling with functions Get ready for exponential and logarithmic relationships Get ready for trigonometry Get ready for rational functions 	Code: VFXCBC38
Pre-Calculus Honors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Get ready for complex numbers Get ready for polynomials Get ready for composite and inverse functions Get ready for trigonometry Get ready for vectors and matrices Get ready for series Get ready for conic sections Get ready for probability and combinations 	Code: 48BQ5ZQN
AP Calculus	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Modeling (Algebra 2) The unit circle definition of sine, cosine, and tangent (Trigonometry) Graphs of trigonometric functions (Trigonometry) Trigonometric equations and identities (Trigonometry) 	Code: TSUHZHF5

The + Positive + Start Program is a FREE, voluntary, non-credited, unsupported, self-paced review of math skills through Khan Academy. The goal is to give students a boost in the prerequisite math skills needed to be successful in the mathematics course in which the student is enrolled in the 2021-2022 school year. The work is meant to be done independently. Students will not be monitored or supported by an instructor. The + Positive + Start Program is not associated with any state defined mathematics course and the review of math skills is not comprehensive and/or parallel to a state defined mathematics course.

Positive Start Program

St. Johns County + Positive + Start Program

- **What is the + Positive + Start Program?**

The + Positive + Start Program is a FREE voluntary, self-paced review of math skills through Khan Academy. This program is not for credit and is not supported or monitored by a teacher. The goal is to give students a boost in the prerequisite math skills needed to be successful in the mathematics course in which the student is enrolled for the 2021-2022 school year.

Completion of the course will likely give students a positive start in math.

- **Is the + Positive + Start Program required?**

No. Participation is voluntary.

- **What is the structure of the + Positive + Start Program?**

The + Positive + Start Program uses Khan Academy for the review of prerequisite math skills. It is a self-paced program containing instructional videos and skill practice questions. The work is meant to be done independently. Students will not be monitored or supported by an instructor.

- **If my student struggles in the + Positive + Start Program, can they receive teacher support?**

No. The + Positive + Start Program is self-paced and self-directed.

- **Will students who participate in + Positive + Start Program receive any credit?**

No. The + Positive + Start Program is not associated with any state defined mathematics course and the review of math skills is not comprehensive and/or parallel to a state defined mathematics course.

- **Is the + Positive + Start Program the same thing as the Middle School Advancement Program?**

No. The + Positive + Start Program is designed to give students a boost in the prerequisite math skills needed to be successful in the course in which the student is enrolled in the 2021-2022 school year.

Positive Start Program

- **What math content is supported by the + Positive + Start Program?**

The +Positive + Start Program supports the prerequisite skills needed for the mathematics courses listed below:

Grade Six Mathematics

Geometry

Grade Seven Mathematics

Algebra 2

Grade Eight Mathematics: Pre-Algebra

Pre-Calculus Honors

Algebra 1

AP Calculus

The student should select the mathematics course in which the student is enrolled in the 2020-2021 school year.

- **How does a student access the + Positive + Start Program?**

Codes to the + Positive + Start Program are located <https://www.stjohns.k12.fl.us/smath/positive-start-program/>.

1. Go to khanacademy.org/join
2. Enter your class code and press "Add".
Class code: _____
3. If you don't already have an account, press "Create a new account". Enter your date of birth, then sign up using Google, your school email, or by creating a username.
4. Enter your grade and subject. Now you're ready to start learning!

Once students enter the code, they will be manually added to the program the next morning (7:00 am). This will activate the program and students will be able to access the assignments. (Allow 24-hours for this process.)

- **How long is the + Positive + Start Program available?**

The + Positive + Start Program will be available from May 1, 2021 through December 31, 2021.

- **Where can parents and students get help using Khan Academy?**

[Helping Your Child](#)

[Khan Academy Help Center](#)

Test Success Strategies

2021 FSA
Testing Dates:



- **April 6th:** Writing (Grades 4-5)
- **April 14th and 15th:** Reading (Grade 3)
- **May 3rd and 4th:** Reading (Grades 4-5)
- **May 12th and 13th:** Math (Grade 3)
- **May 17th and 18th:** Math (Grade 4-5)
- **May 24th and 25th:** Science (Grade 5)

Student Tips:

1. **Think POSITIVE!!**
Attitude is important! BELIEVE you will do a good job.
2. **Review practice tests.**
Become familiar with the format of the test ahead of time to ease anxiety.
3. **Listen carefully to directions.**
Listen to and follow all directions. Ask for help if you don't understand something.
4. **Perform a "brain dump."**
At the start of the test, write down any facts or key information that you are afraid you might forget.
5. **Skip difficult items.**
If you get stuck on a question, skip it and go on to the other questions... then come back and try again later.
6. **Use process of elimination.**
Eliminate answers that you know are incorrect to help you find the correct answer choice.
7. **Read questions & answer choices first.**
This will help you know what to look for while you are reading the passages.
8. **Go back and check your work.**
Use any remaining time to review your answers and make sure you have answered every question.

Parent Tips:

1. **Talk about the tests at home.**
Encourage your child to share concerns about the test with you. Listen attentively and reflect their feelings.
2. **Be encouraging and supportive.**
Remind your child that they have been preparing for this all year, and they are ready!! Tell them you believe in them!
3. **Provide rest and food.**
Ensure your child gets a good nights rest and eats a healthy breakfast.
4. **Arrive to school on time.**
Ease frustrations and anxiety by making sure your child is on time.
5. **Motivate.**
Stay positive!! Remind your child to do their best, take their time, and relax.

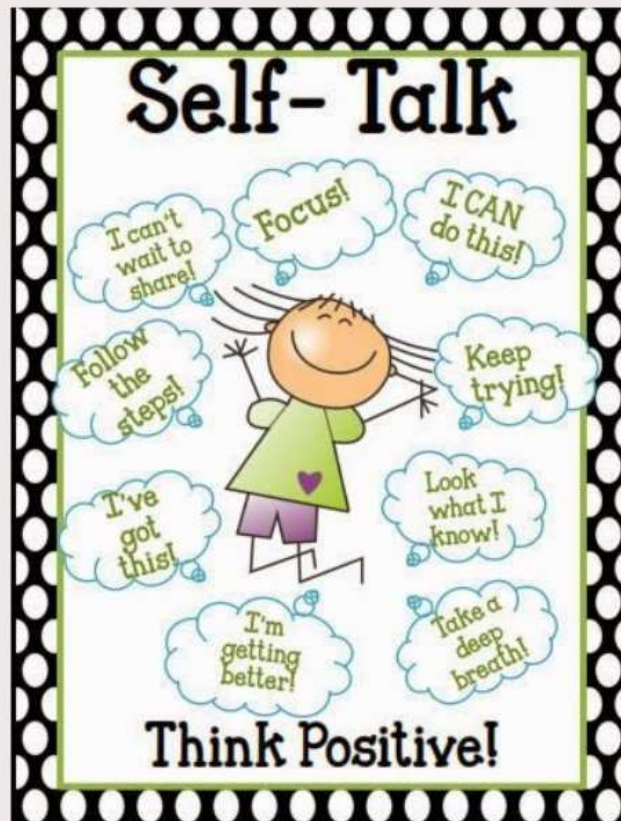
Test-Taking Strategies

- R** Read the question carefully, then reread the passage or the problem.
- E** Examine every answer choice before you choose your answer.
- L** Label your answer (Math)
Look for proof in the passage and underline it (ELA)
- A** Always check your work!
- X** X-out answers that you know are wrong

Test Success Strategies

Calming Techniques:

- **Deep Breathing...**
Take 5 or Lazy 8 Breathing
- **Count to 10...**
Forward or backward
- **Gratitude practice...**
Pause and think of 3 things you are grateful for
- **Visualize success**
- **Pause for peace...**
Close your eyes and relax
- **Get a drink of water**
- **Tense and relax muscles...**
Clench your fists or give yourself a hug
- **Positive self-talk...**
I've got this!! Keep going!!
- **Stretch**
- **Think about what you'll do to celebrate after the test**



Take 5 Breathing

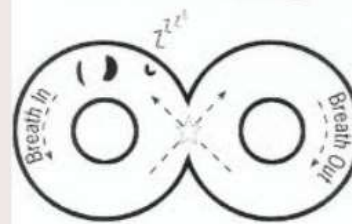
Hold out your hand like a star
Pretend your pointer finger (other hand) is a special pencil
Trace up and down your fingers
Breathe in as you go up
Breathe out as you go down
Go slowly and notice how it feels



PLACE QUIET CALIFORNIA - a safe & welcoming for children, families & schools - info@placequiet.org

*** Please do your best to ensure your child attends school on their scheduled testing dates. If your child becomes ill, please inform their teacher so makeup testing can be rescheduled.**

Lazy 8 Breathing



Visit the FSA Portal for:

- Student/Family Resources
- FAQs
- Practice Tests

www.fsassessments.org

Thank You

Volunteer Opportunities

Immediate Virtual Volunteer Opportunities with Brooks Rehabilitation



Buddies

Provide friendly call services to residents/guests; this may include listening, general conversation, friendship and compassionate support.



Educator

Create how to videos: how to use Zoom, how to draw a face, ASL alphabet, etc...share your skills.



Entertainer

Activities could include singing, dancing, playing an instrument, reading book/poetry, etc. Share your talents. All entertainment should be appropriate for all ages (i.e. Rated G) Can be prerecorded or live



Cards, Art or Stories

Create cards, art or short stories for patients/residents/staff to provide encouragement and support.



Work Out Companion

Be someone's Accountability Partner. Join them via technology as you work out together. They will provide the exercise plan including type and duration, you provide the encouragement and companionship.



Book Club

Share a favorite book by leading a weekly book discussion over Zoom.



Contact: Volunteer Services
VolunteerServices@BrooksRehab.org
(904) 345-7661

BROOKS
Rehabilitation

Volunteer Opportunities



Virtual Buddy:

Provide friendly call services to residents and guests in long-term care; this may include listening, general conversation, friendship and compassionate support.

Requirements:

Completion of: [Application](#)

Completion of Background check (if over 18): [Background Check](#)

Phone Interview: Scheduled upon receipt of application and clearance of background check.
Access to: Phone or Computer

Minimum Age to Call Alone: Rising 9th grader

Skills: Good Listening & Communication Skills, and the Desire to Establish One-To-One Relationships

Submit Volunteer Hours: Monthly

Entertainment Contributor:

Provide a community based entertainment source. Submit prerecorded video of music, dance, singing, How To demonstrations, reading of books, short stories, or poetry. Be creative and share your talents/passions. Not comfortable in front of the camera be the videographer or editor for someone who loves the spotlight.



ALL VIDEOS MUST BE RATED "G"

Frequency of Call: 1-2 times weekly

Duration of Call: Dependent on Participants

Service Hours Awarded: ½ Hour Given for Contact to 15 min., 1 hour given for 16 min. to an hour

Requirements:

Completion of: [Application](#)

Access to: Phone or Computer

Minimum Age: All Ages Welcome

Skills: Good Communication Skills, Good Presentation Skills

Submit Volunteer Hours: With Submission of Video

Service Hours Awarded: Minimum 1 hour for Submitted Well Edited Video

Video length: How to / Educational 2-3 minutes, Entertainment as Appropriate for Performance

Video format: mp4

Send Completed Video to: <https://brooksvs.wetransfer.com>

Include your name and name of performance

Volunteer Opportunities



Cards/Art or Stories:

Create cards, letters or short stories to brighten the day of our patients, residents, and staff all who have had to endure a unique and challenging time. It is these little things that can turn someone's day around.

Requirements:

Completion of: [Application](#)

Access to: art or writing supplies

Minimum Age: All Ages Welcome

Skills: Crafting, Basic Spelling, and Writing

Submissions: Minimum of 4 items

Service Hours Awarded: 1 Hour for Every 4 items Submitted

Submit Volunteer Hours: Monthly

Delivery: Volunteer Services/ Brooks Rehabilitation / 3599 University Blvd S./Jacksonville, FL 32216

Book Club:

Lead the discussion of a book over Zoom. Choose a book and communicate the choice to the group. Conduct a weekly book discussion, of predetermined chapters encouraging everyone's involvement. Keep book choices to books close to 400 pages to ensure everyone can keep up.



Requirements:

Completion of: [Application](#)

Completion of Background check (if over 18): [Background Check](#)

Access to: Zoom, FaceTime, or Similar Program

Minimum Age: Rising 9th grader

Skills: Ability to Lead Discussion and Ensure Everyone has a Chance to Participate

Commitment: 4 weeks or One Book

Submit Volunteer Hours: Monthly

Service Hours Awarded: 6 hours per book

Volunteer Opportunities



Virtual Work Out Companion:

Be someone's accountability partner. Contact them per their exercise plan, and join them via technology as you work out together. They will provide: the exercise plan, including type and duration.

Requirements:

Completion of: [Application](#)

Completion of Background Check (if over 18): [Background Check](#)

Access to: Phone or Computer; ability to use Zoom, FaceTime, or similar program

Minimum Age: Rising 9th grader

Skills: Good Communication Skills, Ability to Provide Encouragement, Through Positive Methods, Good Physical Condition

Submit Volunteer Hours: As Completed

Service Hours Awarded: Minimum 1 hour per session

COVID-19 Updates

Parents/Guardians,

Please assess your children each morning for COVID-19 symptoms and consider the contact questions below. If they have symptoms and/or answer yes to the contact questions, please keep them home, so they are not spreading germs.

Symptoms:

- Fever of 100.4 or higher
- Uncontrolled cough
- Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
- Sore throat
- Loss of sense of smell or taste
- Muscle aches
- Vomiting or diarrhea

Contact Questions:

- **Is your child currently awaiting COVID-19 test results?** If yes, please keep your child home and notify the school nurse when test results received. Further instructions will be discussed at that time.
- **Does your child live in the same household with someone positive for COVID-19?** If yes, your child must quarantine for 10 days from the last date of contact with the positive individual. The quarantine period may be shortened to as few as 7 days if a negative PCR test result is obtained on day 6 or later from exposure to the positive case. The Florida Department of Health (FDOH) will assist in clearing your child to return to school once they have received the negative test result.

FROM THE DISTRICT OFFICE REGARDING NEW GUIDELINES FOR QUARANTINING

Beginning 12/9/2020

The CDC and the FDOH continue to recommend quarantine for 14 days from the date of exposure. However, there is new guidance that allows for a close contact to return to school earlier. There are two options that may allow the close contact to return to school/work before the full 14-day quarantine period has been met:

1. The quarantine period may be shortened to 10 days from last exposure to the positive case if daily symptom monitoring indicates the close contact remains symptom free. The contact can return to school or work on Day 11. HOWEVER, it is extremely important that the contact continues daily monitoring for signs and symptoms through 14 days, as well as, practice social distancing, always wears a mask, and washes hands frequently. If signs or symptoms develop at any point, the contact should immediately isolate, seek medical care, and call the FDOH.
2. The Quarantine may be shortened to as few as 7 days if a negative PCR test result is obtained on day 6 or later from exposure to the positive case. A PCR test is required, and a rapid antigen test CANNOT be substituted. The test must be collected on day 6 or after, and if it is negative, the contact can return on Day 8 of quarantine, if he or she remains symptom free.

COVID-19 Updates

HOWEVER, it is extremely important that the contact continues daily monitoring for signs and symptoms through 14 days, as well as, practice social distancing, always wears a mask, and washes hands frequently. If signs or symptoms develop at any point, the contact should immediately isolate, seek medical care, and call the FDOH.

FAQs:

DO I HAVE TO GET MY CHILD TESTED?

No, assuming your child remains symptom-free, he or she does not need a negative test to return to school on Day 11. If they develop symptoms, you should seek medical care and call the FDOH.

HOW DO I GET PCR TESTING?

- You can obtain PCR testing through your medical provider
- You can obtain PCR testing at a public testing site
- REMEMBER: the rapid antigen test is not accepted, it must be a PCR test
- If your child develops symptoms, seek medical care and call the FDOH.
- Make sure results can be provided within 24 to 48 hours. If the results are likely to take longer than 48 hours, it may be better to quarantine through day 10 and return to school on day 11, if no symptoms. CHILDREN WITH A KNOWN PENDING TEST RESULT SHOULD NOT RETURN TO SCHOOL

IF I GET A NEGATIVE PCR TEST RESULT, OBTAINED ON OR AFTER DAY 6 FOLLOWING EXPOSURE, WHAT IS THE NEXT STEP?

Call the FDOH to check if the result has been reported electronically in their system. If the result is reported, they will let the school know that your child may return, assuming they remain asymptomatic. If you have been notified that the result is negative, but it has not yet shown up in the FDOH system, you will need to provide a copy of the lab directly to the Health Department. NOTE: Please DO NOT fax or drop off copies of labs without first contacting the Health Department to make appropriate arrangements.

