

THE VETS GAZETTE

FALL 2011

ISSUE I

From the Principal's Desk...

Dear Parents,

We are pleased to have all of our students back for the 2011-2012 school year. The month of September brought a smooth start to the school year, and the students have been learning the new routines in their classes. Mrs. Kerr and I are very pleased to be a part of the VMES family. All of our students are transitioning well and the teachers finished their beginning of the year assessments to gain valuable instructional information.

In September, we hosted the 1st Grade Orientation and 2nd-5th Grade Back to School Night. In late November we will host a BSI Back to School Night. The importance of establishing a good channel of communication within VMES Learning Community is the

central theme for all meetings. The teacher is your first point of contact for any questions or concerns. Additional assistance, after speaking with the teacher, can be obtained by contacting one of our counselors and/or an administrator. Remember...Together Everyone can Accomplish More.

Our Reading Theme for this School Year is Reading is Dino-Mite. Each Reading Rally celebrates students who have reached their reading goal each month. In September we celebrated the Summer Reader by presenting them with the Pteranodon Card. In November we will recognize their reading about the Apatosaurus. Each student has received a passport which contains the Dinosaur for each month.

Character Education is another component of our

Reading Rally and each month our students of the month are recognized for their ability to role model the character trait of the month for their peers. The Character traits recognized at each Reading Rally is also listed on each student's passport.

We look forward to continuing to work with you to empower our VMES learners one magical moment at a time!

Yours in Education,
Susan A. McNamara



Dates to Remember:

11/3	Basic Skills Back to School Night
11/10 & 11/11	School Closed~ NJEA Convention
11/17 & 12/15	Board of Education Meeting
11/18	Reading Rally ~ Respect/Citizenship
11/21	Evening Parent/Teacher Conferences
11/21 & 11/22	Early Dismissal ~ Parent/Teacher Conferences
11/23	Early Dismissal
11/24 & 11/25	School Closed ~ Happy Thanksgiving!
12/2	PTA Holiday Show
12/12 - 12/16	Theater Week
12/14	Chorus Concert 7pm
12/26 - 1/2	School Closed ~ Winter Break

VMES: We're Proud of Ourselves, Proud of our School, Proud of our Country!

On Wednesday, September 14th the entire VMES learning community joined together to commemorate 9-11 and celebrate Patriot's Day. As patriotic music played, we assembled in the bleachers at VMMS. We saluted the flag and sang The National Anthem as a

group. Ms. McNamara spoke about remembering those who lost their lives on 9-11 and honoring those who fight for our freedom every day. She told the students that they are our future and reminded them of our slogan—"Proud of ourselves, Proud of our school,

Proud of our country." A moment of silence followed. Ms. McNamara and Ms. Kerr read the poem, "We Are One," by Cheryl Sawyer, and then the students sang, "Proud to be an American." The ceremony ended as the students "created" an American flag!



During the Week of Respect, Mrs. Smith's class sold yellow ribbons to our staff members and earned \$71 for charity!



Please keep bringing in soda tabs, juice bags, and plastic bottle caps for out school-wide collections!





EXCEL with Mrs. Hale



We are off to a great start! Our goal this year for the EXCEL/Enrichment groups is to work on 21st century skills. These skills include: Creativity and Innovation, Critical Thinking and Problem Solving, Communication, and Collaboration. Throughout the year, students will be participating in activities using a variety of technology and websites. Students will be able to collaborate on-line, publish digital stories and poetry, compose multimedia presentation, design webpages, and create movies, slideshows, and online posters.

Some of the websites we will use this year are *Thinkquest* and *Edmodo*.

These are educational online collaboration sites that allow for global learning through discussions and projects. Students are assigned accounts and are strictly regulated under our teacher accounts.

GlogsterEdu is an animated poster site and *Voki Classroom* gives students the opportunity to create talking avatars for educational purposes. Students are also registered and monitored for these sites through our teacher accounts as well.

Students are also learning about the 8 Multiple Intelligences to find out what their learning styles and strengths are. If you would like to find out what your strengths are and

how you learn best, take the online quiz at: <http://www.edutopia.org/mi-quiz>

Thank you to the parents who came to the EXCEL Back to School Night! It was a pleasure meeting you. The PowerPoint of the evening can be found on my website at: <http://www.brickschools.org/staff/chale/default.aspx>

I'm looking forward to a fantastic year!

Sincerely,

Mrs. Hale

chale@brickschools.org

VMES Celebrates Week of Respect: October 3—7th



During the week of October 3-7th, students at VMES participated in Respect Week. Respect Week is part of NJ's Anti-Bullying campaign to teach children to respect differences and respect each other. Each morning students were given a respect quote and kindness challenge over the morning announcements. On Wednesday, students wore yellow as a symbol of respect, the color of our

character education pillar for respect. Grade level assemblies on respect and anti-bullying were presented by school counselors Mrs. Yaegel & Mrs. Jimenez. Students reaffirmed the "Take a Stand Against Bullying" pledge they committed to in the beginning of the school year. A performance by the 5th Grade Anti-Bullying Rappers was a huge hit! Later in the day, Ms. McNamara joined other schools in district by reciting a special poem on respecting others. Teachers focused lessons around the subject of respect throughout the week. Each classroom took part in a door/wall decorating contest, coming up with creative ideas to foster a more respectful school environment. VMES students are proud to be "Safe, Respected, and Bully-Free"!



The True Blue Buddy program was introduced to the fifth grade classes during the Week of Respect. The true blue buddies are fifth grade students that interact with special needs students to build on peer play, social interactions, natural environment teaching, and building on new friendships. This year we had an Open House for the True Blue Buddy program for the first time, to give students a chance to experience what it is like to be a True Blue Buddy.



Our Six Pillars of Character Education



Students here at Vets Elementary have been learning about how the six pillars of Character Education can help make them a better person. Through reinforcement in the classrooms throughout our building and participation in our reading rallies, students are exposed to each of the following traits:

Trustworthiness

Be honest • Don't deceive, cheat, or steal • Be reliable — do what you say you'll do • Have the courage to do the right thing • Build a good reputation • Be loyal — stand by your family, friends, and country

Respect

Treat others with respect; follow the Golden Rule • Be tolerant and accepting of differences • Use good manners, not bad language • Be considerate of the feelings of others • Don't threaten, hit or

hurt anyone • Deal peacefully with anger, insults, and disagreements

Responsibility

Do what you are supposed to do • Plan ahead • Persevere: keep on trying! • Always do your best • Use self-control • Be self-disciplined • Think before you act — consider the consequences • Be accountable for your words, actions, and attitudes • Set a good example for others

Fairness

Play by the rules • Take turns and share • Be open-minded; listen to others • Don't take advantage of others • Don't blame others carelessly • Treat all people fairly

Caring

Be kind • Be compassionate and show you care • Express gratitude • Forgive others • Help people in need

Citizenship

Do your share to make your school and community better • Cooperate • Get involved in community affairs • Stay informed; vote • Be a good neighbor • Obey laws and rules • Respect authority • Protect the environment • Volunteer

Character Education should continue at home. Parents need to help build character; it doesn't just evolve. Encouraging young people to think independently and to do right are the barebones of character education for parents. Teaching, enforcing, advocating, and modeling the Six Pillars of Character daily will set behavior boundaries that will shape the character of your kids — and yourself.

-information provided by Character Counts! program

Update from the Character Education Team

As a committee we have many exciting activities planned and we look forward to involving the entire school community in these upcoming projects and events.



The students did a great job on their PRIDE activities and the 9-11 Commemoration ceremony was meaningful for all involved.



During the Week of Respect, a PowerPoint presentation was streamed during the lunch periods which highlighted students demonstrating respectful behavior. Each month, this will be updated to review each character education trait and celebrate the great things happening at VMES.



On Election Day, students will participate in a school-wide election to select inspirational sayings that will later be permanently stenciled in our hallways.



This year, the character education bulletin board in the lobby depicts our school building. As each class or group of students completes a school-based service project, they will be listed on a brick that will "build" our school with good character.



Students of the Month will be recognized at each Reading Rally. The next



VMES GREEN SCHOOLS NEWS



VMES's Adopt a Spot program is off to a great start! Fifteen "spots" on school grounds have been adopted by teachers and their classes and our wonderful school secretaries. Adoption entails cleaning, weeding and planting areas all around the school and in our beautiful courtyard throughout the school year.

This fall we are planting chrysanthemums for warm, autumnal color now and more tulip bulbs for a spectacular spring display. Thank you to the following teachers, classes and school staff for their steward-

ship and commitment to this Green Schools initiative: Mrs. Bahrenburg and class, Mrs. Tarquinio and class, Mrs. Troncone and class, Mrs. Fritz and class, Mrs. Powell and class, Mrs. Monaghan and class, Ms. DelliSanti and class, Ms. Criscuolo and class, Mrs. Ferriero and class, Mrs. Damiano and Mrs. Szeliga and class, Mrs. Masefield and class, Mrs. D'Erasmus and class and Mrs. Varrall and Mrs. Cofer-Cohen.

A special thank you to Mrs. Monaghan and the juice pouch recycling proceeds from last school year and to our amazing PTA for providing the funding for this program!

Next fall, V.M.E.S will apply for the National School of Character Award. As part of the application, the character education committee has to gather data regarding character education at VMES. It is our intention to document all of the wonderful things that currently go on in our school, along with the new programs we have planned. At this time we are asking parents to complete a short 10 question survey on Survey Monkey evaluating **last year's** Character Education program. This will be our baseline data. **When you complete this anonymous survey please think back to the 2010-2011 school year.** You will complete a similar survey in the spring evaluating all the new programs the Character Education Committee puts in place this year. Please hold the CTRL button and click on the link to complete the VMES Character Education Survey <http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/5CTWSBD>. Each question has a comment section if you would like to give the committee more insight as to why you answered the question in a particular way. Please note that the survey was designed around the 11 principles of a National School of Character. We will use the results from this survey to guide this year's initiatives. **Please complete the survey by Friday, November 18th.**

Thank you for all you do to support the character education initiatives of V.M.E.S. We know how busy each and every one of you is and we truly appreciate your help with this survey.



Halloween Fun Night was filled with crafts, face painting, games, and music. Entries from the Scarecrow and Coloring contests were displayed and winners were selected.



We're looking forward to our Holiday Show on December 2nd. Along with the other exciting activities planned, a magician will be here to perform!

Grocery gift cards (Stop & Shop, ShopRite, and A&P) are on sale every week! You can send your order to school in a sealed envelope, or come to the front hallway on **Wednesdays, Thursdays, and Fridays from 9:15-11:30am.**

Please take advantage of our partnership with Pathmark and Stop & Shop. By registering your cards and selecting VMES as your school, the PTA receives money every time you shop and use your rewards cards.



Assemblies

- Our first Reading Rally was held in September. We recognized summer readers and introduced the character trait: PRIDE.
- Our counselors presented assemblies during the Week of Respect.
- In October, the local fire department gave assemblies on fire safety. Mrs. Hascha enriched the presentation with a PowerPoint featuring student artwork.



Coming Soon...

- November ~ Prevention First will present assemblies with an anti-bullying theme.
- Reading Rally ~ Respect/Citizenship
- December ~ Theater Week for Third Grade Students.

"Let's Jump"

On October 12th, fifth graders at Veterans Memorial Elementary School began jumping ... as in jumping jacks, part of an effort to break the Guinness World Record for the number of people doing jumping jacks in a 24-hour period. The world record attempt, called "Let's Jump!," is part of First Lady Michelle Obama's "Let's Move" initiative, which targets childhood obesity, and began at 3 p.m. on Tuesday with an event at the White House led by Mrs. Obama.

The event at Veterans Memorial Elementary School was the idea of Ocean Medical Center and the Meridian

Network. Donna Sellmann, Meridian's public relations manager, said they heard about the world record attempt earlier in the week and thought it would be a great opportunity to partner with local schools to help promote fitness for kids.



Welcome to the V.M.E.S. Family!

We had some exciting changes at V.M.E.S. over the summer! We would like to officially welcome the following people to our learning community: Ms. Kerr, Mrs. Lemig, Mr. Maciel, and Mr. Balestieri. *Congratulations to...* Mrs. Kempner and Mrs. Raider on the birth of their babies!

Health & Hygiene News...



Please update the health office and main office with current phone numbers to reach parents. The phone numbers are the nurse's link to parents in case of emergency.



The phone numbers listed on the emergency verification forms are also used to pick up your child from school in case of illness.



Please create an emergency plan for pickup for your child if parents are not available.



Having a contact person on your phone list that lives far away will not help your child when illness or fever occurs.

Medication update:



Please do not send any medication to school with your child.



All medication needs a doctor's order to be dispensed in school.



Students are not permitted to take cough drops in school.



News From.....

The Early Act Club

The Early Act Club is planning it's annual used book fair. Please start collecting used books to donate to this event. Further information will be sent home soon.

