



THE

RED & WHITE

JANUARY 2023

A LETTER FROM THE SUPERINTENDENT

Dear Vicksburg Schools Families,

I hope you had a wonderful holiday season and the new year brings much happiness for you and your family.

I am very much looking forward to the exciting things that will happen here in 2023, as we will be shaping the future of Vicksburg Community Schools.

Beginning this month, we will be looking at our community survey

data and meeting with our Strategic Planning Committee to begin creating a 5 year strategic plan for VCS. I look forward to working with our community, families, students and staff on this important project.

This past holiday season saw so much kindness and generosity from our students. In this edition of our Red and White you'll read about the great things they did to

support the community that gives them so much.

I hope you had a restful winter break full of family and friends. I'm looking forward to seeing you all in this new year and kicking off a great year for Vicksburg Community Schools!



Regards,

Keevin O'Neill, SUPERINTENDENT

Vicksburg Pathways' 200th Graduate

This winter, Vicksburg Pathways High School celebrated their 200th graduate!

The alternative high school allows students to take classes at their own pace and provides online learning 24-7 as well as a specialized learning lab that provides individualized help for each student.

Congratulations to Vanessa

Kelly who graduated high school early, taking her final tests today, before ringing the Pathways bell.

Vanessa plans to start right away at KVCC before transferring to WMU. She eventually hopes to attend law school in hopes of becoming a lawyer.

Congrats, Vanessa, on being the 200th Pathways graduate!



STRIVE Field Trip to KVCC, Raffle Tickets

The STRIVE Students at Vicksburg High School are learning about the possibilities for their future.

Six of the students in the program took a private tour of KVCC's Main Campus to learn more about their options after graduation.

Three of their mentors also attended the field trip.

The STRIVE program is a partnership between VHS and the local Rotary club. Its goal is to help make sure seniors who are at risk make it to graduation. STRIVE uses mentors to help students raise their grades and provide motivation.

To help support the program,

The Vicksburg Rotary sponsors an annual STRIVE Beef Raffle.

For a \$10.00 ticket, you are entered into a drawing to win a quarter of a cow, courtesy of Oswalt Farms. This is equal to approximately 200 pounds of the best black Angus beef in town!

Four winners will be drawn on the Friday night of the Winter Homecoming Basketball Game (2/10). You do not need to be present to win.

Tickets can be purchased at the Vicksburg High School office, the VAB or from any Rotarian in our community.

VICKSBURG ROTARY STRIVE BEEF RAFFLE

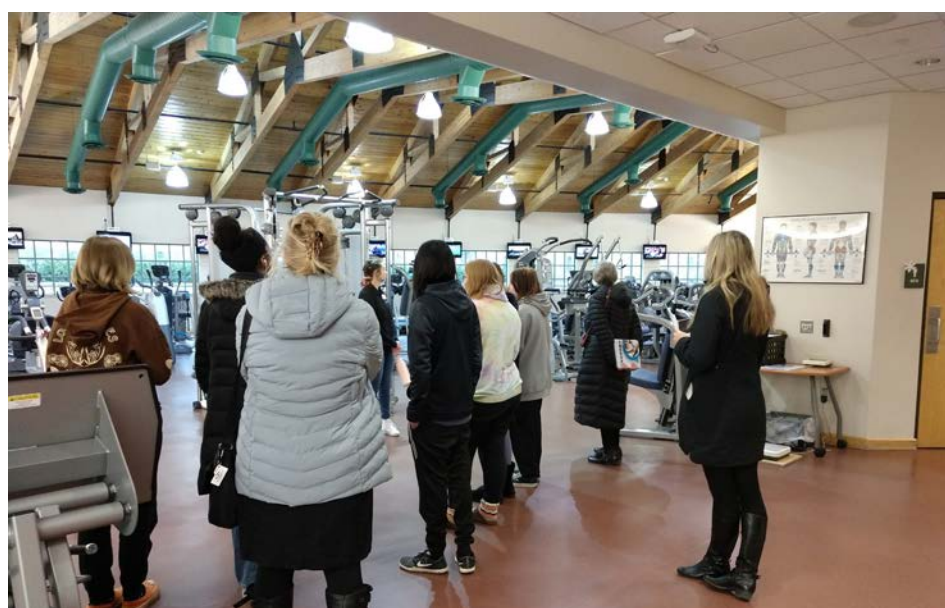
\$10.00 per ticket

Win a quarter of a cow, courtesy of Oswalt Farms!
Proceeds support the VCS STRIVE program

Drawing is 2/10 at
Winter Homecoming Basketball Game



Tickets can be purchased at the Vicksburg High School office, the VAB or from any Vicksburg Rotarian.



Junior Achievement Team Wins Big

Congratulations to the VHS Junior Achievement Titan teams!

The students from Justin McDonald's Marketing classes competed in a business simulation against other schools.

Junior Achievement's programs focus on work readiness, entrepreneurship and financial literacy, all designed to prepare students for work and life in the 21st century.

The VHS team of Jonah Schmidt, Ezekiel Bombich, Charles Emmerich, Patrick Russon took first place at the competition at WMU!



Elementary Students Play Reindeer Games



Our elementary PE classes have been playing some fun games in the name of sportsmanship this winter.

Indian Lake and Tobey Elementary students participated in the Reindeer Games.

Relay teams with 1 of 5 reindeer names for every class played the holiday-themed games that involved both

athleticism and teamwork. With a big emphasis on working together.

The teams earned points for listening, teamwork, sportsmanship, and finally, how they did in games.



Middle Schoolers Give the Gift of Color



A group of students at Vicksburg Middle School gave their history teacher, Zach Wierenga, a huge surprise just before Christmas.

Wierenga is color blind and can not see shades of red or green. The students took up a collection and together bought him color blind glasses so he could see in color for the first time in his life!

8th graders Jaelyn Kellems and Maguire Bowles created a GoFundMe account to help raise money to bring some color into their favorite teacher's life.

During Community Circle time, all of his students from this

semester gathered in his room to present Mr. Wierenga the glasses, enabling him to see the full rainbow for the first time ever.

"Thank you doesn't seem like enough. It was a life-changing moment for me. It just reaffirms that when I come here... it's for the right reasons," Wierenga said.

Art Students Take Field Trip



AP Art and Advanced Photography students from VHS were able to take a field trip to the Grand Rapids Art Museum recently with art teachers Mrs. Lacey and Mr. Lindeman.

They got to explore the exhibit called Jim Henson: Imagination Unlimited, which was fantastic!

The students even got to even hold and control the puppets and make a recording.

They explored the permanent collections as well, and had some insightful conversations with each other about the art.

Robotics Teams Compete at State

A big congratulations to the Vicksburg Middle School Robotics Teams for a great showing at the state tournament!

Control Freaks Team 6494 finished 2nd of 36 in the Woodie Flowers division!

Team 5618 finished 17th out of 36.

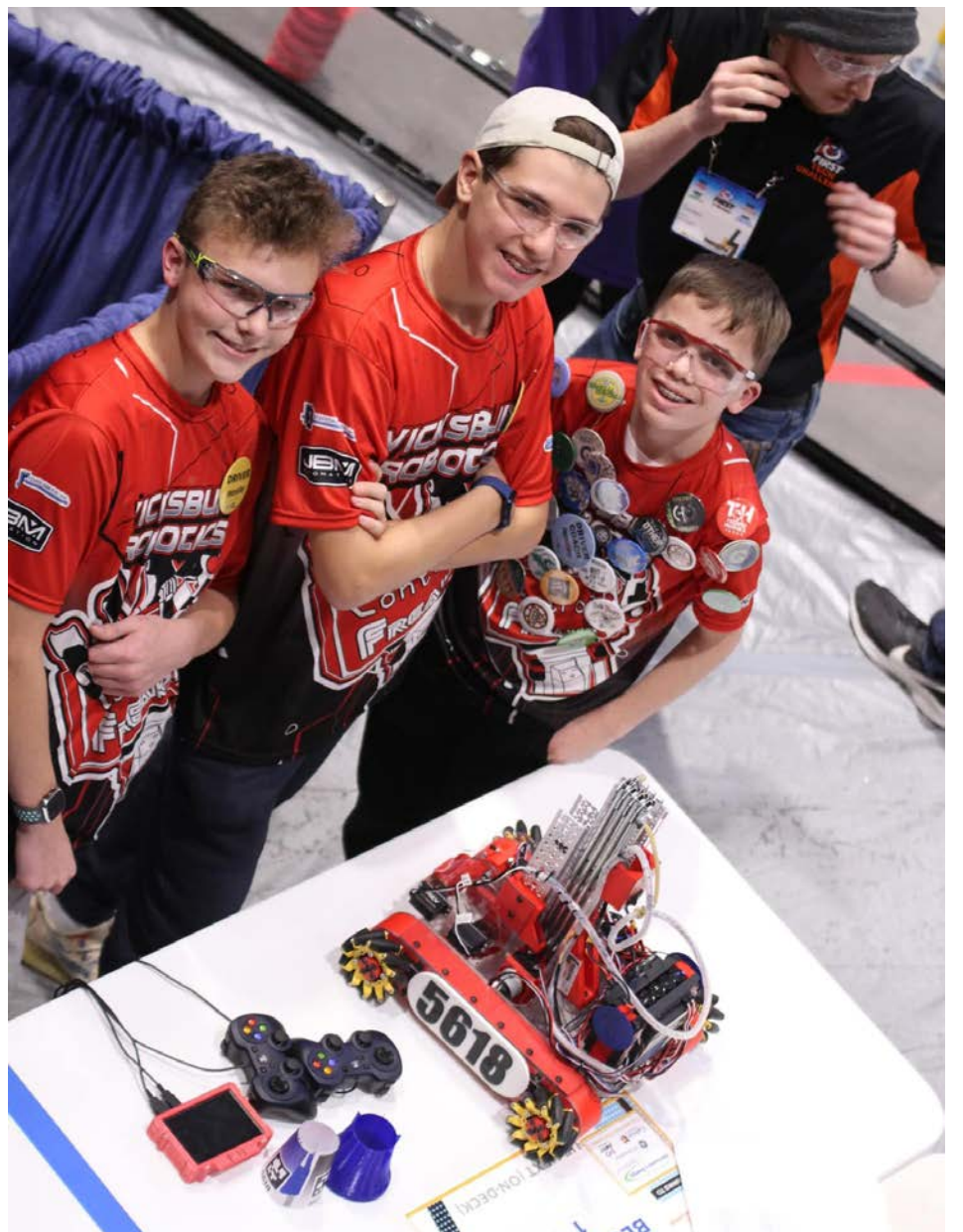
Team 6494 got to pick their alliance for the playoff and chose 5618 plus another team to compete with them. This

alliance lost in the semifinals in a tiebreaker match against the team that won the tournament.

Team 5618 also won the Design Award, winning over all the other teams in their division!

Coach Matt Bombich says it's the best year of robotics yet at VMS, with the largest team they've ever had!

Great job, Control Freaks Robotics!



Drivers Adopt Families for the Holidays

Shoutout to our amazing transportation department that went above and beyond the call of duty and adopted two families on their routes!

They delivered vans full of gifts, food, clothes and personal care items for a total of 7 children and 4 adults, hoping to make their holidays a little brighter.

We can't say enough about their kindness and generosity!



Tobey Tigers Collect Donations



This holiday season the Tobey Tigers held a personal care drive for Twelve Baskets Food Pantry.

Students were challenged to fill the lobby benches and earn a hot cocoa reward.

The Tobey community filled every bench in the lobby and the donations even spilled onto the floor!

We are so proud of their giving spirit!

Girls Basketball Off to Great Start



It's been an exciting start to the basketball season for the varsity girls basketball team!

The Lady Dawgs went into the holiday break 8-0!

It's a young team, with three juniors and five sophomores playing the bulk of the minutes. And the talent is spread out among all those players. The team had a different leading scorer in each of their first 6 games!

Head coach Tim Kirby says the team has one goal this season: to win the very first conference championship in the long history of the girls program.

Good luck to them!!



Indian Lake Giving Tree

Students at Indian Lake filled their giving tree with bows in the month of December!

Every bow represented a donation for either Ministry with Community, Animal Rescue Project or Generous Hands.

Each morning students would gather at the tree to add new decorations after dropping off donation items. In the end, they were able to fill boxes for each organization in the collection.

Great job Indian Lake students, staff and families!



Publishing Party at Sunset Lake Elementary



Third graders in Kelly Sanchez's class at Sunset Lake Elementary held their own publishing party.

The students created their own nonfiction books on subjects they felt they were experts on. They were able to write about something like enjoyed and even illustrate the books themselves.

The students have been learning about nonfiction writing and this was their final project.

Ms. Sanchez invited their families to celebrate their published works and also practice complimenting each other's writing. They took turns going around the room and reading each book and then leaving a positive comment for the author to read.



Sunset Lake Sends Cards to Nursing Homes



During the holiday season, students at Sunset Lake worked to make sure those who might not be with their families had a little something special to brighten their days.

Students in Brenda Warner's first grade class wrote holiday cards to send to people living in nursing homes.

It was a great way for the students to practice their writing skills while also spreading some holiday cheer!



Tobey Tigers Offer a Helping Hand



For the 20th year, the Tobey Tigers have offered a helping hand to those in need.

The "Offer A Helping Hand" program helps to ease the holiday burden for many families.

The program started small 20 years ago, but with help from donations and the community, organizers were able to help 42 families this year.

Along with toys and gifts, Principal Mike Barwegen helps to make sure families also receive personal care items.

April Wilson, the lead organizer, said they do their best to cover

the needs of everyone in the household. Any child under the age of 18, whether they are Tobey students or not, will receive gifts.

This year the grand total on wrapped presents delivered was 1,288! That does not include things like toilet paper, paper towels and personal care items. Wilson says it was a great success with 120 kids having a brighter holiday.

She and Mr. B want to thank the amazing community and local businesses who are so generous year after year. "Offer A Helping Hand" would not exist without them.

