

VIRGINIA SCHOOL FOR THE DEAF AND THE BLIND, STAUNTON, VIRGINIA

VIRGINIA **GUIDE**

WINTER 2015

www.VSDB.K12.VA.US

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ADMINISTRATION

VIRGINIA GUIDE WINTER 2015 VOLUME 142, NO. 01

Patricia Trice - Superintendent
540-332-9000

Keith Van Fossen - Principal
540-332-9014

Becky Church - Student Life
540-324-2444

Nathan McLamb - Human Resource
540-332-9065

Janice Rankin - Operations
540-332-9039

Jane Nessar - Admissions/Records
540-332-9004

Amy Huffer - Student Health
540-332-9027

Blake Porter - Public Safety
540-332-9016

Debbie Pfeiffer - Outreach
540-414-5249

Pattye Leslie - Instruction
540-332-9219

Mary Allen - Food Services
540-332-9038

Marvin Mahler
Facilities & Engineering
540-332-9427

Casey Morehouse - Audiology
540-332-9048

VIRGINIA GUIDE STAFF

Contributing Writers & Photographers:

Dede Norder, Marianne Dunham,
Michelle Hall, Julie Conner,
Debbie Pfeiffer, Jim Kiser,
Sandra Russell, and Robert Strickler, Jr.

Editor:

Benjamin Cardon

Graphic Designer:

Faithlyn Robinson

BOARD OF VISITORS

Emmett Hanger, Chairman
District24@senate.virginia.gov

Dickie Bell
deldbell@house.virginia.gov

Barbara A. Favola
bfavola1@gmail.com

Tony O. Wilt
deltwilt@house.virginia.gov

Paula Young Johnson
jjjpyj@hotmail.com

Ann Latham-Anderson
alathamanderson@gmail.com

John Pleasants
jcpleasants@verizon.net

Alice Frick
wafrick67@gmail.com

Virgil Cook
vcook@vt.edu

Judy Sorrell
Judysorrell99@gmail.com

Mike Asip
Mike_asip@ccpsnet.net

Virginia School
for the Deaf and the Blind
P.O. Box 2069
Staunton, Virginia 24402

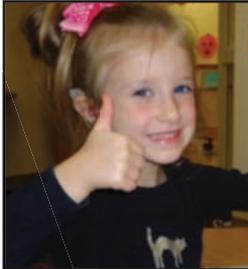
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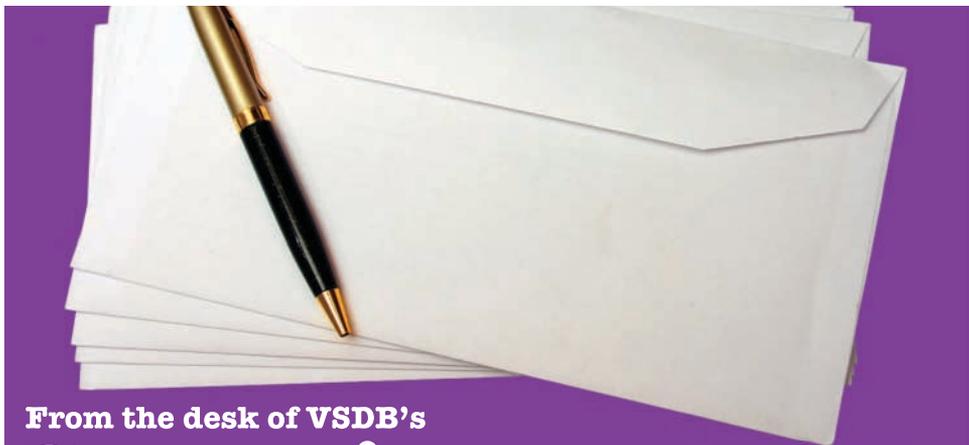
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From the desk of VSDB's

Superintendent

Pat Trice



It is hard to believe that the year 2015 is almost over! What a great year it has been and the year 2016 promises to be even better! VSDB is always full of excitement but especially this year! With new leadership in place, VSDB is headed in a new direction, one that is promising and bright! There is renewed hope in a vision that highlights VSDB as the center of services for students who are deaf, blind, deafBlind, and deaf or blind with other disabilities. Along with an expansion of programs and services, come

additional new learning opportunities for students. One such opportunity centers on the five independent living apartments that are being created in the old Price Hall. The apartments will create the foundation for a new Independent Living Skills Program. In addition, VSDB is looking to expand partnerships that will allow VSDB students greater educational options beyond the scope of VSDB and one that facilitates public school students' access to the unique services and expertise that VSDB



provides. VSDB is being redefined and reshaped into an essential educational resource for the Commonwealth.

In addition to the many changes at VSDB, there is also a sense of renewal! Main Hall is proposed to undergo a two year historical renovation project inside and out. Preliminary work and plans are almost complete in preparation for the General Assembly to review a request in the spring of 2016 for final funding. If approved, the construction will begin in the summer of 2016. As a

5 Virginia historical landmark, there

is great interest in Main Hall's renovation project. The vision is to take Main Hall back to a period of earlier days. The partially covered front porches will, again, be fully exposed. However, since Main Hall is an historical building, there are strict limitations as to how much change can be done. The overall internal structure will not change greatly but areas will be repurposed and updated to support a more efficient functioning office and conference space. Once completed, VSDB will host a grand re-opening. In the interim, Main Hall, including the VSDB museum, is closed to visitors. We look forward



to the completion of the Main Hall renovation project and the re-establishment of Main Hall as VSDB's welcoming "front door".

The Main Hall renovation is not the only excitement on campus. VSDB was honored to hosts visits from two V.I.P.s this fall, the First Lady of Virginia, Dorothy McAuliffe and Virginia's Secretary of Education, Anne Holton. Both visits were great opportunities to showcase VSDB and its unique services and expertise! The First Lady and the Secretary of Education toured the campus, residential halls, classrooms, and pro-

grams. They were impressed with the staff and enjoyed meeting many students. They emphasized their commitment to VSDB and recognize it as a valuable resource for the state of Virginia.

As we move into 2016, we will continue to work to establish a strong foundation for VSDB's future. With a renewed commitment to excellence and a new vision that includes an expansion of services and new partnerships, VSDB is poised to grow and prosper. It is one of Virginia's most valuable resources!





VSD B Fall Fun!

Dede Norder

Fall has arrived! The PreK and K/1 classes enjoy playing in the leaves inside as well as out.

Here is our leaf song (sung to Frere Jacques):

Leaves are falling Leaves are falling
Down, down, down Down, down, down
Many pretty colors, many pretty colors
Red and yellow, orange and brown.

We participated in many fun fall activities

such as pumpkin carving, costume parade, Harvest Day hosted by a wonderful CROPS team, and Color Day.

Speaking of Color Day, the elementary students in the Deaf Dept celebrate color! Each Wednesday students and staff wear a chosen color. They all get together for a group picture. Fun! What's your favorite color?







SHOULD VSDB BRING BACK FOOTBALL?

Investigated by Luis Ramos-Calvario

Virginia School for the Deaf and the Blind (VSDB) organized a football team in 1900. In 1949, a homecoming tradition was formed. Football homecoming was an exciting time. The Homecoming football game was played on a Saturday allowing alumni and friends from across the state to participate.

It wasn't until 1959 that the tradition of selecting a homecoming queen started. That was one of the most fun activities for everyone to see and recognize the honor being placed on a female senior. The icing on the cake was the fact that the senior and junior classes were able to

raise funds due to generous alumni and friends.

Unfortunately, after 87 years of this enjoyable tradition, the football game was last played in the fall of 1987. It was disbanded in 1988 due to insufficient number of players.

Luis Ramos-Calvario decided to investigate this matter to see if VSDB should bring back the football team. Luis asked staff and students this question: **"Do you think VSDB should bring back football?"** 100% of the staff said 'yes'. 73% of students said 'yes', while 27% of the students said 'no'.

Staff

**100%
yes**

Student

**73%
yes**

**27%
no**





SHOULD VSDB REQUIRE SCHOOL UNIFORMS?

Investigated by Kimiya Dent

Supporters of school uniforms believe that wearing a school uniform reduces economic barriers between students, disciplines students, reduces bullying, and encourages student to focus on education, not on fashion fads.

On the other hand, protesters believe that wearing a school uniform limits students' creativity and reduces their freedom of expression. Also, school uniforms can be expensive and not all parents can afford them. In addition, school uniforms can impact girls more

negatively than boys because it focuses on body image. Some girls are not comfortable wearing a skirt.

Kimiya Dent decided to do research to find out what VSDB thinks about school uniforms. She asked VSDB students and staff this question: **“Do you think VSDB should require a school uniform?”** Here are her results: 73% of the staff said ‘no’, while 27% of the staff said ‘yes.’ 76% of students said ‘no’ while 24% of the student said ‘yes’.

Staff

73%
no

27%
yes

Student

76%
no

24%
yes





Meet **MARK FISHER**

Marianne Dunham

On September 25, we were fortunate to have a well-known Deaf animator present to our school audience and wrap up Deaf Awareness Week.

Born Deaf, Mark Fisher attended the Archbishop Ryan Memorial Institute in Philadelphia and later the Marie Katzenbach School for the Deaf in New Jersey. He holds a BFA from Gallaudet University. He is recognized as the first successful Deaf animator, working on several well-known films such as: *The Land Before Time*, *The Little Mermaid*, *The Swan Princess*, ***The Prince and the Pauper***, and ***The King and I***.

Fisher has also worked on animation that includes gestures and signing - a very difficult and time-consuming process.

Freddie Fish, later renamed Merboy, and his work for *Deaf Way I and II*, featuring *Starman*, are examples of this work. Animation including signs require many more illustrations than that of "talkies." In 2001 he won the grand prize for *Elves* and *The Bat Beast*, a one-minute short at the Atlantic City Film Festival.

He also worked for the TV productions of *MAD TV*, *Family Guy* and other T.V. shorts. (Bio by Patti Durr)

VSDB students were impressed with his experiences and talents. After Mark's presentation, many students asked him questions, eager to follow in his footsteps. VSDB students, remember this, you can do anything except hear!



I got booked @
VSDB
092015
#ireadbannedbooks

I am banned
because I
use the
N word

I am banned
because some
people think I
represent
Marxism

I am banned
because telling words
is against African and
is it more banned
and
and

WHEELS ARE
I am banned
because I story
a child and
and I'm not
and
STORY 7 SENDAK

I am banned
because I
encourage a poor
philosophy of life
and I am negative
toward African people

LIE
KATE CARY



BANNED!

MICHELLE HALL

The week of September 28 was national Banned Books Week. So many people, when they see the word “banned”, believe that it also means “illegal” but that is not true!

Our wonderful country is full of many beautiful freedoms including the freedom to read whatever is of interest to us. Sometimes, however, certain people or groups will decide that a particular book is offensive in some way and so should not be located in a library or school. Some books are easy to spot as books that may be banned, such as Harry Potter for witchcraft or **The Lion, the Witch and The Wardrobe** for being too religious. Others are a little more difficult to discern because the reasoning is a little less typical. Here are some of the books that have been banned over the years and the reasons they were banned:

The Wonderful Wizard of Oz by L. Frank Baum

This book has been banned because the main character is a strong female who is the definite hero of the story. This, surprisingly, has been offensive enough to have the book banned.

It also portrays a witch as “good” which some say is impossible as there is no such thing as a “good witch”.

Winnie the Pooh by A.A. Milne

This book has been banned because of the

talking animals. Talking animals go against the laws of nature and so it goes against God who created the world.

Charlotte’s Web by E.B. White

This book has been banned because it talks about death and some people feel that death is too sensitive a subject to be discussed with children. It also has talking animals.

The Lorax by Dr. Seuss

This book has been banned for criticizing the logging industry.

So, as you can see, many books are banned for reasons that are personal to only a few. In general we follow this guideline: If a book isn’t right for you then, please, don’t read it. We have so many items to choose from (more than 16,000!) and I am sure we can find something that you will enjoy. Then you are welcome to read as much as you want!

Information sources:

<http://orgs.utulsa.edu/spcol/?p=3231>

<http://drseussbanned.weebly.com/why-was-the-lorax-challenged.html>

<http://bannedbooks.world.edu/2011/04/03/banned-books-awareness-charlottes-web-eb-white/>

<http://www.newsweek.com/very-brief-history-banning-winnie-pooh-286216>

2015 HOMECOMING QUEEN



Name: Lourdes Benitez
Senior
Hometown: Alexandria, Virginia

2015 HOMECOMING KING



Name: Marvin Whitfield
Senior
Hometown: Crewe, Virginia





VSDB'S WORK STUDY

GOING GREEN!

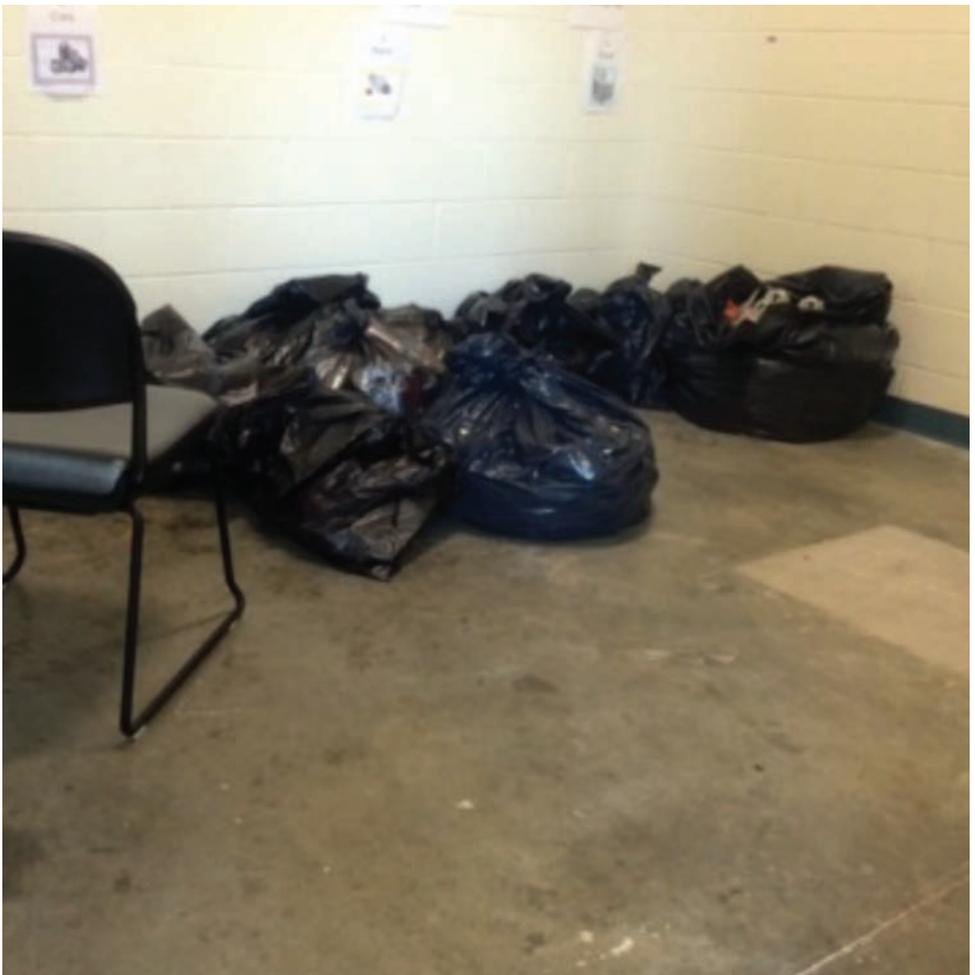
Julie Conner



Our students with multiple disabilities have been “going green” in their work study classes! For several years, the students in our MD classrooms have been collecting recycling for the school. Jobs for this task start with dividing up into groups to cover collecting cans, paper, cardboard, plastic and glass around the campus. Students walk to various classrooms, as well as other

locations on campus, such as our library and student center.

Next, items are taken to a recycling room in the High School building. There, students sort all of the items they collected into appropriate areas. From there, cans are taken to a local scrap metal location and money is collected from the cans, which they



are able to use for an end of the year social. The other items are taken to a local recycling area. This year, students are able to be involved in this final part of the process, as they are able to travel to the recycling area and sort the items there.

From this experience, students learn the various jobs involved in the process of recycling, as well as the importance of taking care of the environment. In previous years, students traveled to the landfill for a field trip, and were able to tour and see the various jobs at the landfill as they observed the processes

there. This project reinforces concepts of daily living as well as job skills as

they work on orientation and mobility as they walk around the campus, learn communication skills and the importance of working as a team, how to socialize appropriately with others (co-workers as well as those who they are helping), how to sort/classify items, as well as all of the processes involved in recycling. The following are quotes from students involved with the program:

“I like recycling. I like to help others.”

“I like sorting and collecting. I like to recycle.”

“I like recycling because it is fun. I enjoy doing it because I like helping others.”



“It is fun to do the recycling and help others.”

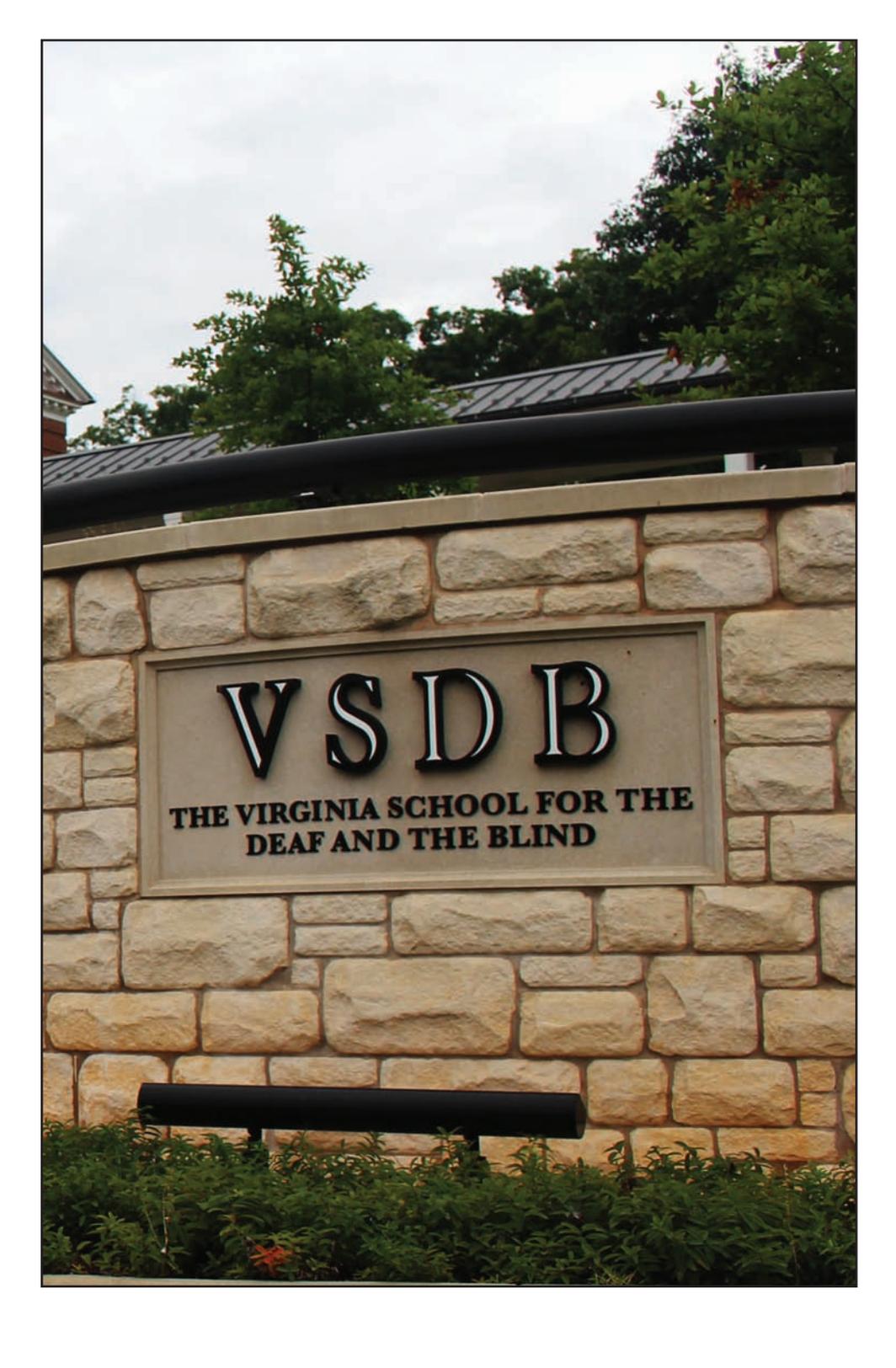
In addition, students in the MD classes are adding a composting program to their work study. They are fortunate to work with the CROPS program, which teaches farming and gardening to students on a weekly basis, and this year we are beginning a program in which they collect compost from various locations in the school and transfer it to compost bins. Students are also responsible for transferring/mixing compost, and keeping the bins clean. Students have very recently started this, and are excited to help the CROPS program create compost which

they will use in the spring as they assist in planting. This project also reinforces a wide variety of work-related as well as daily living concepts including health, and the importance of growing fresh fruits and vegetables! Students have said the following about this project:

“I like CROPS, my favorite is spending time with my friends.”

“I like doing CROPS. I like to do the composting. It is fun.”

“I like mixing the compost. Compost helps the garden grow.”

A stone wall sign for VSD B, The Virginia School for the Deaf and the Blind. The sign is mounted on a wall of light-colored, irregularly shaped stones. The letters 'VSD B' are large, black, and three-dimensional. Below them, the full name of the school is written in a smaller, black, sans-serif font. The background shows a building with a metal roof and green trees under a cloudy sky.

VSD B

**THE VIRGINIA SCHOOL FOR THE
DEAF AND THE BLIND**

OUTREACH

Debbie Pfeiffer

Outreach Services at VSDB were expanded in July, 2014, through a grant provided by the Virginia Department of Education. The goal of the grant is to help educators throughout Virginia meet the needs of their students who are Deaf/Hard of Hearing, Blind/Visually Impaired, or Deaf-Blind.

Following is a summary of Outreach activities for Fall, 2015:

Training Series (to be posted online, location to be announced)

Family American Sign Language (ASL) - short lessons on vocabulary and phrases, presented with ideas for use in normal daily routines of infants and toddlers, and associated cultural/language building lessons. (9 vocab lessons and 14 lessons on language development for a child using sign language are being edited, voice overs are being added in English and in Spanish.)

LSLS Minutes - brief presentations explaining strategies for use in developing listening and spoken language skills, with embedded videos that demonstrate application. Dr. Lori Bobsin, University of Virginia (8 lessons are currently being edited.)

Wednesday Webinars

September 23, 2015 - Tech Do's and Don'ts

for AT: Preparing Students with Visual Impairments for Postsecondary Education, Korey Singleton, ATI Manager George Mason University (42 participants attended)

September 30, 2015 - Evidence-Based

Practice for Students with Sensory Impairments: Deaf or Hard of Hearing, Dr. John Luckner, University of Colorado (75 participants attended)

October 14, 2015 - Evidence-Based Practice for Students with Sensory Impairments:

Deaf-Blind, Dr. Susan Bruce, Boston College (22 participants attended)

Live Trainings

August 18-19, 2015 - Fairview Reading Program training for state ToDHH, SLP, and ed. interpreters, at VSDB (planned for VSDB staff and opened to personnel from the public schools; representatives from 16 school divisions attended this training and were provided with Fairview resources through Outreach Services)

October 17, 2015 - Haptics Workshop,

Awareness Level, Marilyn Trader, Helen Keller National Center. Hosted at VSDB by Outreach Services, and sponsored by VA Association of Deaf-Blind, VA Relay Services, VA Department for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing, and VA Department for the Blind and Vision Impaired. (56 individuals attended, including 12 interpreters and 4 SSPs)

October 19, 2015 - CAPP italizing on Technology,

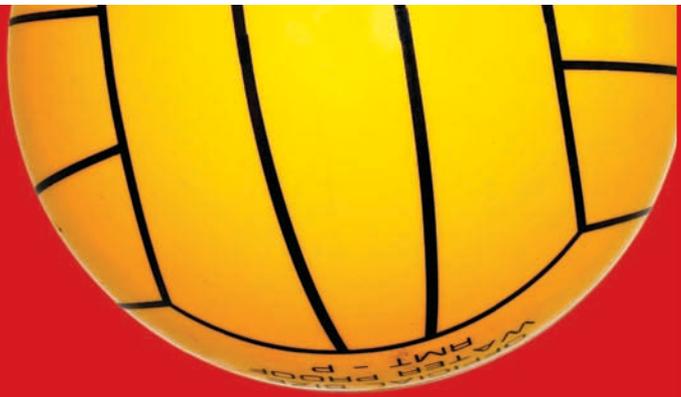
Tina Childress, 2014 winner of the I. King Jordan Award and the Cheryl deConde Johnson Award in Educational and Pediatric Audiology. Sponsored by Outreach Services, VSDB in Fredericksburg. (52 participants attended)

October 24, 2015 - Outreach Services spon-

sored Nancy Rourke, Deaf Artist, who presented and led an art session at Families to Families, a gathering of families of children who are deaf or hard of hearing in Norfolk, VA. (8 children and their parents attended.)

If you have ideas for future Outreach activities, please contact Dr. Debbie Pfeiffer, Director of Outreach Services, at Debbie.Pfeiffer@VSDB.k12.VA.US .





VSDB GIRLS' VOLLEYBALL TOURNAMENT

Jim Kiser



Our girls' volleyball team returned last night after spending a wonderful weekend at the Kentucky School for the Deaf in Danville, KY. We participated in the Mason-Dixon Volleyball tournament with 9 other schools. Normally 11, two did not attend with Eastern North Carolina lacking enough players and South Carolina not able to attend due to the flooding conditions in the state.

After all the games had been played, our girls came in 6th. We were tied with the Kentucky school for 5th place but when using the tie

breaking system our girls were 4% points from getting that 5th place position. Still a great job by our girls!

Here is how the games went. We started against our friends in the south, North Carolina, who we have always played closely. Playing best out of 3, NCSD won the first set 19-25 with VSDB winning the next two 25-21 and 15-13. We then faced the Florida School who ended up winning the tournament. We lost to them in 2 sets 12-25 then 20-25. To most of the people observing this game our girls



played their best game. Yes, they lost, but it was the way they played that impressed. Controlled passing, setting up teammates, returning serves and yes, some overhand serves from our girls we don't normally see. That ended the first day.

On to Saturday and our third game, Mississippi, who took 2nd place in the tournament. Tough morning for our girls. We lost in 2 sets 14-25 and 17-25. Being that this tournament is double elimination, next up for us is, yes again, North Carolina. Our girls won another close one in 2 sets 25-21 and 25-18. Next up is Tennessee, without much rest we lost to TSD in 2 sets 18-25, 11-25.

Our final record in the tournament is 4 and 7 so we enjoy the remaining part of the day watching the finals and the awards program. The tournament finished with Florida winning followed by Mississippi, Alabama, Tennessee, Kentucky then Virginia. As you can see, we played 3 of the top 5 schools. Much of our team's success is due to the leadership, experience and motivation of our team captain,

Lourdes. Her abilities were not missed when she was selected





to the All Tournament Team.

Our team experienced a great year with much more room to grow and improve. One measure of improvement is how well you play as the season progresses. This year we lost the first 6 matches we played with many of those matches decided by few points. From that point on, we never lost a match till we faced Florida, 6 consecutive wins.

I hope you get a chance to congratulate each member of the team for their contribution as well as Lourdes for her leadership.

Thank you to the coaches Patti Cooke and Jenilee Fletcher who did an outstanding job. Here are the members of the team:

- Lourdes Benitez
- Tasha Waddell
- Tiona Johnson
- Ankita G.
- Thania Garcia-Ramirez
- Tiniaja Mosley
- Anaizha Thompson
- Vivian Mata
- Danyeal Davis
- India Fuller
- Hailey Snodgrass (manager)

Wright's
DAIRY-RITE

CURB SERVICE

FAMILY OWNED
SINCE 1952

HIRING
EXPERIENCED
COOK
VEG SOUP



Holiday

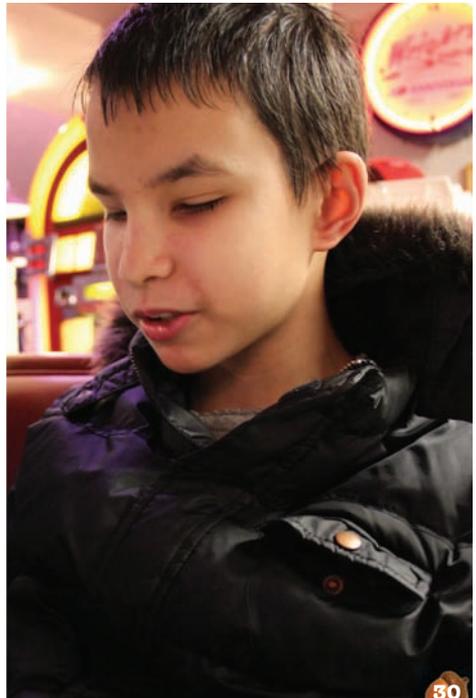
DELIGHTS!

Sandra Russell

On Dec. 8th, Kiser Second Floor went out in the Community to look at Christmas Lights. This is an annual event that the Residential Hall participates in. We went to Gypsy Hill Park and to a well-lit house in the city limits. The students always get a kick seeing this house be-

cause there are so many lights and decorations.

After seeing the lights, we all went to Wright's Dairy-Rite to have their delicious Hot Chocolate and talk about all the beautiful things we just saw. This trip was enjoyed by all.







GHOST!

Robert Strickler, Jr.

It's not a full-fledged story of unspeakable horrors, I am sorry to tell you. It's just a short story of a brilliant accident and a cowardly escape. If you have the time and the energy to waste reading this humble anecdote, please feel free to read on.

It was Halloween at VSDB once again. The year escapes me, but I was most likely in middle school at the time. I do not even remember what sort of costume I had on, but I remember the incident at Main Hall.

I had arrived 30 early minutes by mistake, and the party in Chapel Party would not start until 7:30. My ride had already left, so I lingered around the old SLO office, exploring the nooks and crannies on the first floor. I walked up the side staircase and turned around on the landing. The first thing I saw, while lifting my head up to take in what was suddenly and terrifying in front of me - a pair of feet clad in white, fluffy slippers.

Only, I could see the wooden grain of the stairs through the feet. They were white and see-through, and the little hairs prickled up on the back of my neck. My heart dropped and all I could think was, RUN. I looked up some more, and found the hem of a long nightgown swaying gently in the semi-darkness. I wanted to look up and look them in the eye. I wanted to introduce myself to them. I wanted to see a real, entire, ghostly entity.

Instead, I turned around and ran down like a little yellow-bellied child. The person at the SLO did not believe me, and I went into the party forever traumatized by the loss of a new friend.

So this is my letter to you, the ghost in the slippers and the night gown - I hope you are well, and I will greet you properly the next time I see you.

Best regards, Robert

the shoemaker
and the
institution

faithlyn robinson

The Shoe maker

Faithlyn Robinson



As you may or may not know, I love history and am always on the prowl for historical facts. It was during the summer of 2013 that I stumbled onto this alarming article. It was about our institution.

Back in the late 1890's, Virginia School for the Deaf and the Blind (VSDB) was called the Institution. Even Beverley Street (formerly known as Main Street) was dubbed Institution Road. The word, "Institution," caught my eye and made me stop to read the article. The article was shocking. It was about the shoemaker and his scandalizing accusations against the Institution.

The shoemaker, John L. Randolph, brought serious charges against the Institution. The charges were:

1. Females at the institution were being taken advantage of by the male professors.
2. Drunkenness and liquor were running rampant at the institution.
3. Rumors of a dead baby being found and buried on the campus.

4. Physical abuses by Professors against students.

The Institution was outraged and denied the charges. Since the letters were sent straight to the Senate at the Richmond Capitol, it forced the Senate to initiate a full-fledged investigation. For three months, the Senate investigated the charges, putting the Institution into an "infamous" spotlight. The town of Staunton was still supportive of the Institution and encouraged the investigation to remove the stains of accusation against the Institution. The ex-Civil War captain, Superintendent Doyle, fought not only for his innocence, but for the reputation of the institution. Results of the investigation were surprising!

This started a two year project which I would like to share with you. This project produced a 400-page book called, "**The Shoemaker and the Institution.**" This book will be available for purchase in the early spring of 2016. If you want a copy, please contact Faithlyn Robinson.



VIRGINIA SCHOOL FOR THE DEAF AND THE BLIND STAUNTON, VIRGINIA

VISION:

VSDB provides an environment which fosters self-confident students who are contributing citizens and life-long learners and serves as a resource of excellence for the communities of Virginia who serve students who are deaf/hard of hearing, blind/vision impaired and deafblind.

MISSION STATEMENT:

Our mission at the Virginia School for the Deaf and the Blind is to provide educational and residential services that promote:

- V**alue for each person and their unique abilities
- S**uccess in meeting each student's academic goals
- D**iversity in instruction to meet the needs of all students
- B**uilding opportunities that foster expertise in technology and its integration, communication, and achievement for all staff and students and their families.

VSDB BELIEF STATEMENT:

- 1) Students learn best when actively engaged in the learning process.
- 2) Students learn best when VSDB staff maintain high expectations for student learning.
- 3) All students in our school need an equal and appropriate opportunity to learn.
- 4) Curriculum needs to incorporate a variety of learning activities to accommodate differences in student learning.
- 5) Motivation to learn is influenced by a student's emotional state, beliefs, interests, goals and habits of thinking.
- 6) Teachers, administrators, parents and the community share the responsibility for helping students learn.
- 7) All students benefit from frequent and positive interactions with peers and others
- 8) Students need positive role models throughout the school community.