December 2022

The Vision Voice

VISION CHARTER ACADEMY

Vision & Hearing Testing

VCA will be holding Vision & Hearing Testing on Dec. 8th and Dec. 9th which will be starting at 8:30am.

Acadience/Galileo

Acadience and Galileo testing has returned to VCA. If you have any questions please reach out to your HQC/POC and check the upcoming events calendar for dates.

Book Fair

We held our annual Fall Scholastic Book Fair for two weeks in November. If you are interested in knowing more please read the article about the event.

Upcoming Events

Dec. 2nd- Parade of Lights
Dec. 2nd- Eureka! Science Museum Field Trip
Dec. 7th- Cookie Decorating Exploration
Dec. 11th- In District Crossover Registration Forms for 2nd Semester Due
Dec. 14th- Ornament Making Exploration
Dec. 21st- Semester 1 Ends

Vision & Hearing Testing
Dec. 8th-9th

Acadience Testing
Dec. 5th-16th

Galileo Testing
Dec. 12th-20th

Christmas Break
Dec. 22-Jan. 3rd

A WORD FROM CARYN

By: Caryn Braddy

"Celebrate what you want to see more of."- Tom Peters

Taking time in December to reflect on the semester, assign grades and make plans for next semester is all part of the cycle for a VCA learner, parent, and staff. It is easy to focus on the things that we have not achieved or the actions that we should have taken; however, I challenge you to refocus your efforts on the things that worked.

What skills did your learner attain? What part of the school day is the most successful? What lesson or task did you prepare and implement with the greatest enthusiasm? What support from VCA helped the most? As a former VCA parent (both of my children graduated from VCA), I recognize the time, effort, challenge and dedication it takes from learners, parents, and staff in order to meet educational goals each semester. The Middle of Year Galileo (3-11 graders) and Acadience (K-5 graders) are great tools to show the progress that your learner has made this year. Success is shared with all who participate in this educational journey together. Celebrate the successes you have achieved together and look towards next semester with renewed energy to continue what is working and incorporate what works into any challenges you face.

The Importance of Reading by 3rd Grade

“According to research, third graders who are not reading at grade level are among the most vulnerable to drop out of school later."

“A long-term study by the Annie E. Casey Foundation found that students who were not proficient in reading by the end of third grade were four times more likely to drop out of high school than proficient readers. In fact, 88 percent of students who failed to earn a high school diploma were struggling readers in third grade."

"Third grade has been identified as important to reading literacy because it is the final year children are learning to read, after which students are “reading to learn.” If they are not proficient readers when they begin fourth grade, as much as half of the curriculum they will be taught will be incomprehensible.” (Weyer and Casares, 2019)

Vision recognizes the important role we play in helping learners become readers. One valuable tool to regularly evaluate whether or not learners are on track to becoming proficient readers is the Acadience benchmark assessment. The Acadience assessment evaluates literacy skills at three points during the school year: beginning of the year, middle of the year, and end of the year. By detecting when students need extra support, Acadience enables HQCs and parents to prevent reading failure and improve student outcomes.

The Acadience benchmark assessment is composed of short, one to three minute assessments that measure early literacy skills like phonemic awareness, basic and advanced phonics, accurate and fluent reading, and reading comprehension. Those skills are assessed through activities such as recognizing the letters of the alphabet, identifying the first sound in a word, recognizing all of the sounds in a word, correctly reading a “made-up” or “nonsense” word, reading a passage aloud and telling about what was read, and reading a passage silently and selecting the correct word to complete sentences within the passage. The specific components of each learner's assessment are determined by the grade he or she is in.

We will be doing Acadience assessments for all kindergarten through fifth grade full-time learners from December 5 through December 16. Your HQC will work with you to arrange a time to do your learner’s Acadience benchmark assessment so we have valuable information to help celebrate your learners achievement and identify skills to work on.

By: Angela Valentine

Galileo Testing

VCA will be administering the required middle of year Galileo assessments to all full-time 3rd - 11th graders from December 12 - 20. The Galileo assessment is a local benchmark assessment that provides an opportunity for families and HQCs to track grade level skills that have been mastered and those that need more practice. Learners benefit from practice in taking a standardized assessment. Parents benefit from receiving a roadmap of accomplishments and skills still to be attained. HQCs use this information to provide additional support and resources to reach all grade level skills by the end of the year.

Third through 8th grade learners complete assessments in both Math and English Language Arts. Ninth through 11th grade learners complete assessments in Math, Reading, and Writing. The tests are taken electronically. VCA provides both in-person and virtual assessment options for only the middle of year assessment. End of year assessments will all be in person. In-person assessments are done at the Resource Center and are proctored by VCA staff. Virtual assessments are done through a proctoring site called TalView. Prior to being approved for the virtual option, a virtual proctoring agreement must be completed by the learner and parent.

We look forward to seeing the great progress our learners have made this semester.

By: Angela Valentine

Respiratory Virus Toolkits

Respiratory viruses, including Respiratory Syncytial Virus (RSV), flu, and COVID-19 are spreading across Colorado and the nation. Protect your loved ones, the community, and our health care system by:

- Getting vaccinated. Both flu and COVID-19 have effective, safe vaccines. Anyone 6 months and older can get vaccinated for flu and COVID-19. It is safe to get the vaccines together.
- Seeing or calling a health care provider or doctor before going to a busy emergency department when you or your child has respiratory symptoms. Your provider can help you determine the best ways to manage symptoms and when it is important to be seen in the clinic, urgent care, or emergency department.
- Staying home when sick, including not visiting or interacting with people who may be at higher risk, including older adults, young children, and infants. What might feel like a mild cold for one person can be very serious for another person. This is important to preventing the spread of viruses and causing outbreaks, which put additional strain on the hospital system.
- Washing your hands frequently for at least 20 seconds with soap and water or use hand sanitizer with 60% alcohol.
- Covering your nose and mouth with a tissue or upper arm sleeve when you cough or sneeze, throw away the tissue after you use it, and clean hands as instructed above.
- Cleaning potentially contaminated surfaces, like doorknobs, tables, handrails, etc.
- Avoiding sharing cups, eating utensils, and touching your face with unwashed hands.

If you are interested in reading more on this topic please click here.

FFT Update

November was Food for Thought's first full month of operation, and it was a great test to see how our new model would work. So far, it has been a huge success, with FFT being able to send out over 140 bags of food per week since we started. We are currently in the process of applying to partner with the Food Bank of the Rockies to purchase food. We are on track to complete the application by the end of the semester. We are excited to work with FBR again and are grateful for the opportunity.

The French Family

By: Christian Alires-Gallegos

With the semester coming to an end, there will only be one bagging session left by the time this newsletter is published. Please contact cgallegos@visioncharteracademy.org or keep an eye on Schoology if you are interested.

Read-a-thon

"A book, too, can be a star, 'explosive material, capable of stirring up fresh life endlessly,' a living fire to lighten the darkness, leading out into the expanding universe."
– Madeleine L'Engle

VCA wanted to focus on reading during the month of November, so we held a month-long Read-a-thon in which learners could spend as much time as they wanted with their heads in a good book. This month, there were a couple of learners who did an outstanding job and deserve to be recognized for their efforts.

Most Minutes Read
- Cassidy Bellew-2791 minutes

Most Minutes Read (Class)
- Jane Knob

Most Readers
- Laurel Jones

Most Amount Raised
- Nathan Conant-$285

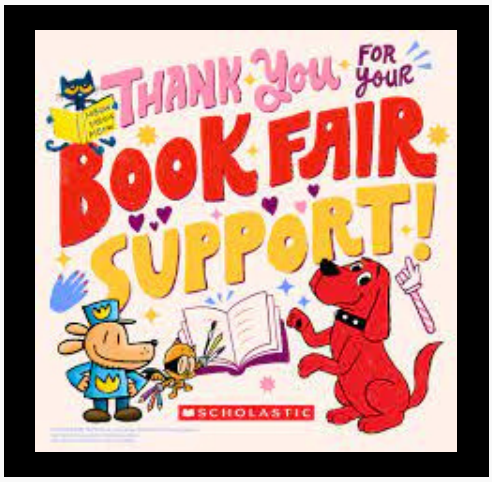
Most Amount Raised (Class)
- Theresa Hardin

More information will be posted in the January Newsletter and everyone who participated will win a prize.

By: Christian Alires-Gallegos

Book Fair

VCA held its annual Fall Scholastic Book Fair from November 7th to November 18th, and it was a huge success! It was wonderful to see all of our families come in and experience the unique excitement that only a book fair can provide. Thank you to everyone who helped out at the book fair; we couldn't have done it without you.



By: Christian Alires-Gallegos

High School Happenings

News you can use for all High School Learner 2022-2023

DECEMBER

In District Crossover Registration Forms for 2nd Semester:
If you are continuing to take a crossover class(es) at any In District High School, a new crossover form for second semester must be completed by the crossover high school, signed by the Learner, Parent and your POC and submitted to the Guidance Specialist before December 12th.

Going to college or technical school remains a sound investment for Coloradans: Annual return on investment report helps students and families better access the value of earning a degree or certificate. The Colorado Department of Higher Education (CDHE) released it's annual Return on Investment Report which helps students and families access the value of a college degree or trade certification. The report shows that completion of postsecondary education yields significant benefits.

Key findings

- In terms of annual earnings, those with a bachelor's degree far exceed those with only a high school degree or equivalent, with an average salary gap of **$20,727** per year. Graduate or professional degrees are associated with the highest average annual wage at **$71,561**, earning **$36,418** more per year on average, relative to those with a high school diploma or equivalent.
- In Colorado, almost all students whose family income is less than **$48,000** and who apply for aid receive some type of financial aid from the federal government, the state, or the institution.
- Debt among Colorado residents graduating from the state's public institutions continues to be on a steady downward trend since 2014. In 2021, **55%** of resident students graduated with no loan debt at all.

Learn more about earning Industry Trade Certifications at the Technical College of the Rockies by signing up for a campus tour on January 20, 2023 at 1:00pm. TCR Tour Sign Up

More information about the many programs available to TCR can be found on their site: Technical College of the Rockies

The DMEA Youth Tour in Washington D.C., June 12-18
Participants begin the tour in Denver where they learn about Colorado's state government and Colorado's cooperatives. From Denver, they fly to Washington, D.C., where they attend educational seminars and visit with their representatives in the House and the Senate. Students also visit historic sites in Washington, D.C.: the Lincoln Memorial, Mount Vernon, Arlington Cemetery, and the Smithsonian, just to name a few. Participating in the Youth Tour is a great way to learn about this great nation, develop leadership skills, gain a better understanding of electric cooperatives, and make friendships with people from across the state and country.

The Youth Leadership Camp, July 15-20
A number of special presentations are highlighted at the camp including electricity safety, leadership skills, avian protection, and a simulation to help students understand the legislative process. The group also visits the Craig Station Power Plant and the Trapper Coal Mine.
Of course, there is plenty of time for recreation. Glen Eden Resort has a volleyball court, swimming pool, hot tubs, and tennis courts. There is a dance, pizza parties, a banquet, a gondola trip to the top of Mt. Werner, time to explore Steamboat Springs, and a raft trip on the Colorado River.

More information and the application form can be found at https://dmea.com/youth-leadership-programs.

For more information please go to VCA High School Happenings

By: Darci Hellman

December Exploration and Field Trips

With Acadience and Galileo Testing taking place this month, we will not be having a traditional exploration. instead we will have a couple quick stop by explorations so learners can take a break from testing.

December 2nd- Field Trip	• If interested please look at the section below.
December 7th-Cookie Decorating	• Stop by and decorate some cookies.
December 14th-Ornament Making	• Drop in and • make a Christmas tree • ornament.

By: Christian Alires-Gallegos

November/December Field Trip

The November Field Trip was pushed back a week due to Thanksgiving Break, becoming a November/December Hybrid Field Trip. VCA pays a visit to Eureka! McConnell Science Museum on December 2nd from 1-3pm. If you are interested in attending the, please check Schoology to see if there are still spots available.

By: Christian Alires-Gallegos

November Explorations

Explorations in November were more hands-on, with learners getting to experience new cultures or learn about the wonders of science. On November 2 we explored the Day of the Dead, so students could delve deeply into the tradition and discover why it was the world's fastest growing holiday. November 9th, learners had to work a little harder than usual as they made ice cream in sandwich bags by shaking the ingredients. It was an excellent way for learners to learn about science while also remaining engaged. The infamous breakout box reappeared on November 16, this time with a Minecraft puzzle that everyone who took part in enjoyed.

By: Christian Alires-Gallegos

Nov. 16th- Learners VS the Minecraft Challenge

Nov. 9th- See science can be fun

Nov. 2nd- Day of the Dead arts and crafts

Trick or Treat on Main Street

Vision Charter Academy had the pleasure of participating in Delta's Annual Trick or Treat on Main Street. The event is arguably Delta's most popular and VCA greeted hundreds of Delta's youth with the sweet gifts of candy and toys. A special thank you to all the staff that helped and all our amazing families stopping by to make Trick or Treat a great time for everyone involved.

VCA Staff handing out candy for Trick or Treat Main Street

By: Christian Alires-Gallegos

Parade of Lights

Learners hard at work making peppermint décor

VCA held an exploration on November 30th that was solely focused on making decorations for our Parade of Lights float! We wanted to include something about our students because they are arguably the most important part of the VCA family. Everyone who wanted to made their own signature peppermint candy to go with our Peppermint Wonderland theme.

By: Christian Alires-Gallegos

Spotlight Zone - Learner

Janeth Corral

Janeth Corral is a sophomore at Vision Charter Academy, where she is in her fourth year. VCA has proven to be a place where Janeth can discover new interests and opportunities. This year, she is taking advantage of a variety of learning platforms, including campus courses at our Learning Center, a crossover campus course at Delta High School, a hybrid VCA AP science class (online platform with a weekly virtual class led by the Highly Qualified Coordinator), and elective courses at home with parent and Point of Contact (POC) support. Janeth is definitely a Vision Learner who makes the most of individualized learning!

She is pleased with VCA because it provides a unique learning experience for each individual learner. The team of Highly Qualified Coordinators and teachers who oversee courses is another key to her success. "I like how teachers make sure we understand the concepts they're teaching us and try to explain it in different ways," Janeth says. Janeth is gaining confidence as she masters course content and plots her path to graduation and life after high school, thanks to the flexibility and solid support she has received.

When asked about her long-term goals after high school, Janeth is quick to share that she wants to be an entrepreneur and travel the world. Janeth is collaborating with her POC to develop courses on entrepreneurship and the business world. With her work ethic, natural curiosity, love of learning, and determination Janeth will undoubtedly maximize educational opportunities and lay the groundwork for long-term success.

Vision Charter Academy is pleased to offer a setting where motivated and inquisitive students like Janeth Corral can navigate high school in the manner in which they learn and grow best. Janeth's personality, her family's support, and the team she works with at Vision all contribute to her success. We are honored to be a part of her story, as well as the stories of all the learners and families with whom we have the privilege of collaborating as an individualized learning community.

Janeth, we can't wait to hear about all the places you'll visit and things you'll do!

By: Amy Novacek

If you believe there is someone who deserves to be recognized in our Spotlight Zone please email cgallegos@visioncharteracademy.org with a small paragraph and a photo of that person.

Spotlight Zone - Staff

Nicole Peterson

I am the K-8 Academic Specialist here at VCA where I teach K-2 Reading and Intervention Classes, work one-on-one with students who need a little extra academic support, provide interventions and ideas for the HQCs when needed, and organize the K-8 testing. I was born and grew up in Montrose where I graduated high school. I then went to Grand Canyon University in Phoenix where I earned a Bachelor's degree in Elementary Education. I taught in a regular classroom for 7 years until I was able to stay home with my two wonderful sons for 8 years while developing and teaching online college classes from home and earning my Master's Degree in Educational Leadership. I moved on to be a Director of a private school in Scottsdale. AZ for 13 years and just moved back "home" to Montrose last year where I am enjoying small town life and adjusting to my empty nest. I enjoy reading, hiking, watching football, visiting National Parks and spending time with my sons whenever I can. I really enjoy being part of the K-8 team at VCA and love watching the learners grow and thrive

Mike Gauthier

My name is Mike Gauthier, and I recently accepted the position of Custodial Maintenance with VCA. I live in Cedaredge, Colorado, with my of 35 years (I think you all know my wife). We raised two wonderful daughters, both of whom we homeschooled for the majority of their lives. Both of our daughters are educators, and it appears to be in their blood. Our family now consists of two dogs, two cats, and a slew of chickens. I enjoy gardening, being outside, woodworking, and cooking. I currently run my own woodworking business, where I create custom projects such as cutting boards. I come from a diverse background and have worked in a variety of industries, including the weather industry, sporting goods, batteries, and as an entrepreneur. I am semi-retired from the corporate world, but I enjoy working with people and my wife insists that I keep busy. I'm pretty handy with tools and keep buying fixer uppers to hone my skills (and buy new tools). I enjoy working with small organizations that have a family feel, and I am excited to serve VCA in this capacity.

Mark Miller

Mark's life has been filled with incredible stories ranging from his love of music to his own studies in natural healing and medicine, then you have to mention his great love for dogs. If there's a job career you can think of there's a good chance Mark might have some experience with that. In 2009 he met the love of his life in Colorado and quickly realized that this is where he belongs. He recently moved to Delta from Denver and is quickly falling in love with the community as he plans to build a life here.

If you believe there is someone who deserves to be recognized in our Spotlight Zone please email cgallegos@visioncharteracademy.org with a small paragraph and a photo of that person.

Kudos Korner

For the Month of November We have the Following Staff Highlighted for Kudos!

Amy Winston: By Jenn Wray, Heidi Reese

- Amy goes above and beyond all the time! I ordered fish from a science company, Amy accepted the delivery and then took care of the fish over the weekend at home!
- Amy is fantastic! When I need something from the resource center, she is quick to respond and the request is fulfilled the same day. It's great to know we can rely on the resource center to get important resources to our students on time.

Shannon White: By Heidi Reese

- Shannon, Amy's indispensable sidekick! She is always willing to assist, even if we have to figure it out as we go! The resource center has a welcoming atmosphere that reflects the wonderful people who work there.

Amy Winston and Christian Alires-Gallegos: By Kerstin Owens

- For their incredible efforts in getting everything ready for the book fair. The book fair would not have been as successful without their efforts.

Amy Winston and Shannon White: By Renee Joyce

- VCA is extremely fortunate to have Amy and Shannon in our resource center. Whatever a learner or family is going through, Amy and Shannon are always available to assist, troubleshoot, support, and connect. They lead with heart-centered compassion, purpose, and talent, and there is no doubt that their care and services are critical to our overall success. Personally, knowing that the two of them are here to support all of us brightens my days. Thank you so much to Amy and Shannon (and their "assistants"/kids) for everything you do to look after us here at VCA.

Rick Troutman: By Amy Winston

- He is a huge asset to the library and his willingness to go above and beyond for Shannon and and myself, offering to do the heavy lifting and even the dirty work. We are truly fortunate to have him at VCA.

Kerstin Owens: By Angela Valentine

- Kerstin worked hard to ensure that everything was in order so that things could continue to run smoothly while she was away. She put together a folder that includes not only work that her sub can do, but also detailed information about what a sub at the RC's front desk needs to know.

Want to earn a shot at winning a $5 gift card of your own? Send kudos when you catch staff going above and beyond to: hrdocuments@visioncharteracademy.org

YOU CAN'T WIN IF YOU DON'T PARTICIPATE!