



VAE Annual Newsletter

FALL / WINTER 2020

LEARNING IN THE AGE OF COVID

BY ANDREW DEITZ - VAE PRESIDENT

Greetings! Wow, what a year! As easy as it is to focus on all of the negative of 2020, I'm very happy and positive about the way our organization pulled together, stayed strong and were able to provide close to \$20K to our local educators in the form of classroom grants! In addition, as the schools in our communities opened for this 2020/2021 school year, they were greeted by a welcome sign at their entrances from VAE showing our support for the great work being done by the staff of each of the schools.

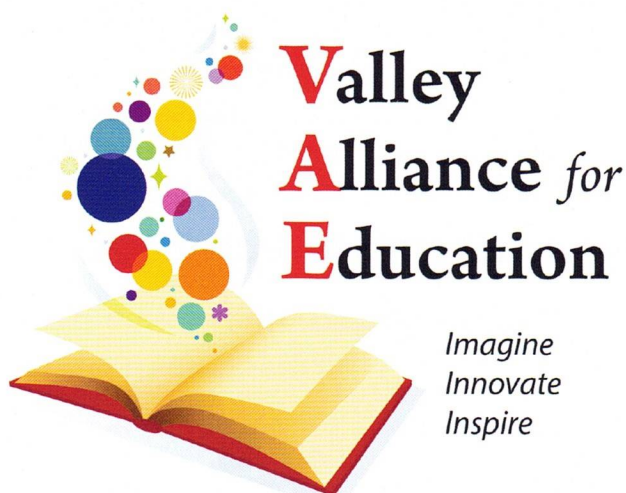
This small but mighty gesture was made possible by a very generous, anonymous donation by a community member. I'm always encouraged by the way our community rises to the occasion in the face of uncertainty and adversity. We live in a very special place with amazing people! As we move into our 30th year of existence, I look forward to the positive stories on the horizon and greatly appreciate your support as we continue to Imagine, Innovate, Inspire and Positively Impact the communities in which we live and serve.

- Stay healthy and safe, Andrew.

FINANCES

VAE continues to be excited about the high quality grants we have received. We awarded **over \$17,000** to teachers in Augusta, Staunton, and Waynesboro that will impact over 3,000 students. The grant winners focused on critical thinking, STEM, and enhancing SOL instruction.

We are looking forward to reviewing the grants for 2021-2022.



STAUNTON CITY SCHOOLS

BY JESSICA HERR

I am super excited to be able to work with the students and to get the kits in their hands. The hybrid model will certainly throw the pacing off because I will only see a group once every two weeks. I still hope to get everything in as of right now. It may impact when we wrap up the final project. It may need to push into May. As we know more and I need to adjust I will know more about what to propose!

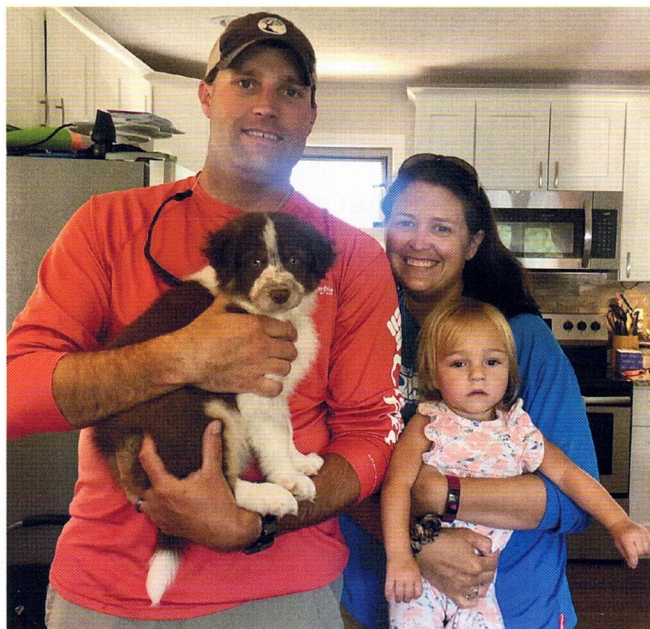


Jessica and her family

WAYNESBORO CITY SCHOOLS

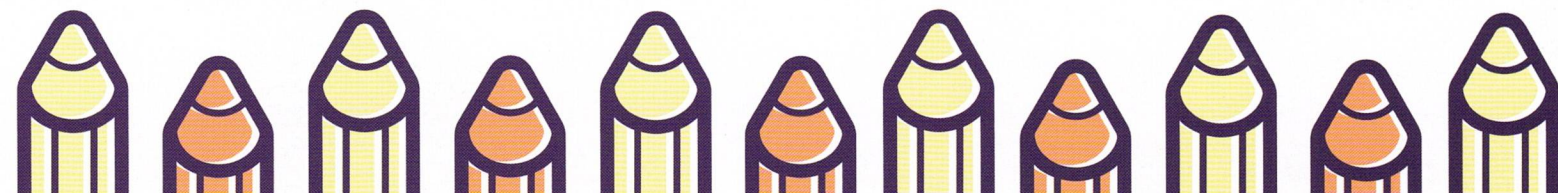
BY ERIN HAGEDORN

While we are virtual for the first semester, we are planning on students returning by January. I will be completing research and design phases of the project while students are in a virtual setting thus allowing us more time hands on when they return, and more students will be able to participate!



2021-22 Classroom Grant application opens on December 14th 2020 and it will remain open until March 22 2021.

Apply here: <https://www.vaeva.org/grants/>



OUR FUTURE AND YOUR ROLE

**BY KATIE FORD
PUBLIC RELATIONS**

Greetings from the Public Relations Committee! 2020 has been quite a year. Just like so many non-profit organizations, the VAE has been affected by COVID-19 in ways we never could have imagined. However, despite the roadblocks put down by this pandemic, we were still able to award \$17,000 in grants to area teachers, which will, in turn, benefit nearly 3,000 local students during what is perhaps the most difficult year in modern education.

In order to continue to bring educational opportunities to our teachers and students,

we need your help. Every donation we receive *directly* impacts student learning. This holiday season, please consider including us in your giving. Because of our generous donors, teachers and students receive tools to enrich their curriculum.

While we were so sad to cancel most of our incredible events this year, we can't wait to (hopefully) participate in these exciting events next year. Contact us if you would like to get involved!

List of events planned for 2021

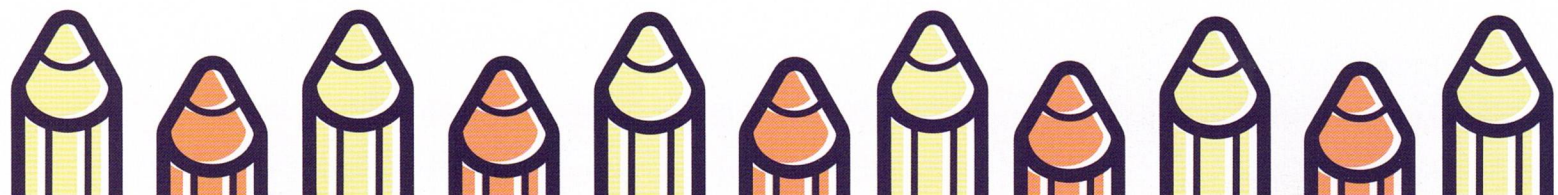
- Relay For Life
- Annual Grant Winners Reception
- Queen City Mischief & Magic Festival
- Holiday Party for SAW Teachers

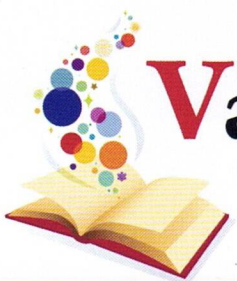
Your donation benefits teachers and students in the Staunton, Augusta, and Waynesboro schools.
DONATE TODAY <https://www.vaeva.org/contribute/>

STAUNTON CITY SCHOOLS TEAM RESPONSE

**BY DR. GARRETT SMITH
SUPERINTENDENT - STAUNTON CITY SCHOOLS**

During the closure, employees from our maintenance, custodial, school nutrition, and transportation departments were heroic. Due to their efforts we were able to continue to provide meals for students, deliver necessary technology, keep our buildings and buses sanitized, and complete necessary repairs and maintenance. Our teachers and administrators worked throughout the summer to prepare for virtual teaching and learning [in] our SCS University - Virtual Edition all summer to prepare for the school year. Altogether, they completed over 10,000 hours of professional development. We are proud of how well they have adapted during these challenging times. The best thing that the community can do to help us right now is to follow the mitigation strategies outlined by the Virginia Department of Health. Wearing masks, social distancing, washing hands frequently, and avoiding large, indoor gatherings are all strategies that help us bring students back and keep them in school.





Valley Alliance for Education

Imagine Innovate Inspire

OUR MISSION

We engage community partners to promote educational excellence in Augusta County, Staunton, and Waynesboro Public Schools.

To see a full list of winners, please visit <https://www.vaeva.org/recipients/>

Want to get involved? Contact us!
vae@lumos.net

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