



Valley Alliance for Education is a 501c3 non-profit organization that is entirely funded by tax-deductible personal and corporate donations. To donate, return the enclosed form or visit our website and click on contribute. Contact vae@lumos.net with any questions or comments.

A Note from our President

by Liz Fravel



I often say VAE is the best kept secret. Someone recently asked me to explain what we do. I answered, “we get to put money in classrooms to support teachers, bring innovative ideas in the schools, and make learning fun”. I feel like I might be the luckiest person in the world because I get to be a part of this organization. As a public-school parent, I get to say **thank you** to all the educators making a difference by giving of my time and resources.

What a year 2023 has been! This past year saw our Golf Tournament return for its second year bringing in more sponsorship and teams than the previous year. VAE volunteers participated in Queen City Mischief and Magic and managed to raise enough money to fund several grants and share our mission with festival goers amidst howling wind and pouring rain (we’re still saying thank you to the volunteers who made this event happen). 2023 saw many exciting new things for VAE. We welcomed several new board members who bring a huge amount of talent to our team. We’re going into 2024

with a wonderful group of dedicated volunteers devoted to supporting VAE’s mission. We unveiled a new, more user-friendly website. We encourage you to check it out; it’s SO good! We were honored to be one of 18 local organizations awarded a one- time grant in the amount of \$100,000 by the Ntelos Foundation, formerly the Clifton Forge Waynesboro (CFW) Company. This is the largest grant VAE has ever received. This will help cement VAE’s legacy long beyond our time. We are grateful and humbled to have been included. And finally, we were able to fund every grant the Education Review Committee recommended for approval.

Looking ahead to 2024, we continue to evolve and grow while staying true to our mission. We changed our Creative Classroom grant timeline to better fit with the school system’s budget timelines and schedules. Our Education Review Committee worked with The Community Foundation to make the grant application more streamlined and easier. We look forward to hosting our 3rd annual Golf

Tournament (we’ll announce the date soon). Our board is focused on getting our message out and sharing the impact we have within the SAW community. We hope to share VAE’s role in the communities we serve with more people in the coming year.

As I embark on my first full year as President, I want to say thank you to each of you. Thank you for believing in us and in our educators. They are making a difference every single day. We are looking forward to the year ahead and excited to share some exciting updates!



Elizabeth Fravel and family



Our Mission

We engage community partners to promote educational excellence in Augusta County, Staunton, and Waynesboro Public Schools. Want to get involved? Contact us at vae@lumos.net

CREATIVE CLASSROOM GRANTS

Valley Alliance for Education held its annual reception honoring the 2023-24 Creative Classroom grant recipients and 2023 divisional Teachers of the Year, on August 22, 2023, at Blue Ridge Community College. Thanks to VAE's generous donors and business partners, 27 creative classroom grants were fully funded, supporting 42 area educators, in 20 different schools across the SAW districts spanning from Pre-K- 12th grade. These grants totaled up to \$42,707.91 of innovative, hands-on, educational tools and resources provided to make learning FUN inside of classrooms. Many of the grants focus on statewide SOL initiatives and can be used across multiple grade levels and will be used for multiple years.



We continue to be amazed at the incredible ideas submitted by our grant winners; they truly are making a difference in the lives of their students!

Below is a photo of the 2023 VAE Grant Winners at the annual reception.

Visit our website at <https://vaeva.org> to see the list of recipients.



Student quotes about how they feel about the classroom grants:

"They are so fun you don't feel like you are even doing math!" Brogan H, 5th Grade student

"When math is fun it makes it easier to learn and focus." Aaron P, 5th Grade student



SUPERINTENDENT SPOTLIGHT

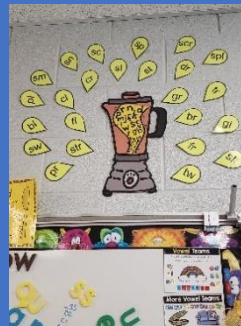
**Dr. Garrett Smith, Superintendent,
Staunton City Public Schools**

Our theme for the 2023-24 school year is "High Expectations into Practice." We know from John Hattie's research on educational impact which practices work best. Collective efficacy and teacher estimates of student achievement are important areas of focus. When teachers believe in their students' ability to learn and in their own ability to move students academically, the results are beautiful.

That is why Augusta County Public Schools, Staunton City Schools, and Waynesboro Public Schools so appreciate the support of the Valley Alliance for Education. VAE engages community partners to promote educational excellence in our school

divisions. VAE recognizes that strong schools are foundational to healthy communities.

Through the Creative Classroom Grant program, our awesome teachers receive financial support to make their great ideas about teaching and learning a reality. We come together during our annual VAE reception to share the best of the best. It is truly an uplifting and inspiring event. Thanks to VAE for their faith in the power of our public schools. When all of us are united in striving for the best for all students, we cannot be defeated!



Fall/Winter 2023

**Attention Teachers in Staunton,
Augusta, and Waynesboro Public
schools.**



**Do you have a creative idea for a
classroom project?
Are you in need of extra funding?**

Apply online for a VAE Creative Classroom Grant.

Applications are currently being accepted.

Apply online at www.vaeva.org.

**Deadline to apply is
February 15th, 2024.**



TEACHER OF THE YEAR

CONGRATULATIONS to the 2023 Teachers of the Year!

At the VAE annual reception each division's teacher of the years home school was awarded a \$1,000 school grant in honor of the Teacher of the Years accomplishments!



Elizabeth Benbow, Stuarts Draft Elementary School, Augusta County Public Schools Teacher of the Year
Pictured with Dr. Eric Bond ACPS, Superintendent and Tina Bowersox, Principal SDES, 2023 Augusta County Public Schools Teacher of the Year



Brandy Johnson, Shelburne Middle School
Pictured with Dr. Garrett Smith, SCPS, Superintendent
2023 Staunton City Public Schools teacher of the Year



Amber Gibson, William Perry Elementary School
Pictured with Dr. Ryan Barber, WCPS Assistant Superintendent, 2023 Waynesboro City Public Schools teacher of the Year

QCMM

Thanks to Tropical Storm Ophelia, Saturday, September 23 was a challenging rainy and windy day. Fortunately, VAE volunteers persevered for most of the day, offering raffle tickets for a special Harry Potter Lego set and handmade jewelry by Kim Hardy. Sunday was a breezy but sunny day filled with lots of magic and mischief.

In addition to raffle tickets and jewelry, VAE volunteers provided craft options for the youngest attendees to enjoy!

The total amount raised was \$2,289.53. Thanks to all our VAE volunteers, teachers, and MBU students who assisted during the two-day event. We couldn't have done it without the group effort!

Brittany and Todd Bacon of Harrisonburg were the lucky winners of the Harry Potter Lego set!



Watch for details and dates for the 2024 Golf Tournament. If you have questions, please call 540-943-0029 or email vae@lumos.net.

Thank you to our Grant Sponsors!



RECOGNITION OF OUR 2023 CREATIVE CLASSROOM GRANT SPONSORS



The Jamin Fund – Mr. Charles Wilson Jr.

McKee Foods

NTELOS Wireless
Foundation/LUMOS Foundation

Susan Pauly

Valley Trust Insurance Group

Dr. Jim and Mrs. Pam Huggins

Ronnie and Linda Young/ River Hill Farm

Dr. Richard Bolstein and Mrs. Sharon Adams



Join our list of generous donors! Use your phone camera to select the QR Code to donate now.



Thank you to our generous grant sponsors and our dedicated donors. These grants are only possible because of you. We appreciate every one of you, and your continued support!

VAE "A YEAR TO REMEMBER"



Elizabeth Fravel (Left)
Kathryn Ford (Right)



Dr. Richard
Bolstein and Mrs.
Sharon Adams



Great message and we appreciate all our golf hole sponsors, participants & donors



Holiday Lights Set Up Crew: Left to Right – Jim Killen, Randy & Tonia Garman, Sharon Killen, Andrew Deitz, Patricia Devitt



2023 VAE
Reception