



FALL/WINTER 2022

# NEWSLETTER

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](mailto:vae@lumos.net) with any questions or comments.

## CREATIVE CLASSROOM GRANTS

This year was an outstanding year for grant applicants. All the grants recommended by the evaluation committee were funded. We are hoping with the changes to the application we will have more grant applicants in 2023-24. Each applicant can request up to \$1500 in funding and each teacher can apply for two grants per year. The grants are available for teachers Augusta County, Staunton City, and Waynesboro City. A team of community members and educators evaluate the grants. This is a blind process, so the evaluators don't have any identifiable information. We've had amazing grants and hope for another great pool of grants this year.

Patricia Devitt,  
Educational Excellence Committee Chair

**To see a full list of this year's grant winners, please visit**  
<https://www.vaeva.org/recipients/>

**The 2023-24 Grant application will open December 14th 2022 and will close at midnight on Monday March 13th 2023. Start planning and get creative now to be ready to apply.**

**For more information visit:**  
<https://www.vaeva.org/grants/>



## 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](mailto:vae@lumos.net).



## SUPERINTENDENT'S NOTE

The start of the 2022-2023 school year has been a great one. Returning to school in a very "normal" setting after three years of disruptions has generated excitement and inspiration for staff and students alike. Our learning is accelerated as we return to the focus of assuring academic success for all students with the goal of all students performing at or above grade level. Our schools have added significant resources in personnel and programs to address the mental health, social, and emotional needs of our students, families, and staff and are experiencing progress daily as we settle into our routines and daily schedules. Students are participating in extra-curricular activities, including sports, musical and theater performances, art shows, and academic competitions to name a few. Classroom teachers continue to utilize new activities and teaching strategies to provide students interesting, engaging, and challenging experiences. Thank you to VAE for your support of our students and teachers as we continue to provide the best educational experiences possible in our school divisions.

Dr. Jefferey Cassell,  
Superintendent Waynesboro City Public Schools

# PRESIDENT'S CORNER

We are officially in the season of togetherness and gratitude, and perhaps more this year than the recent past, we have so much to be grateful for. Schools are feeling more "normal", students are reengaging in lost learning opportunities, and teachers are finally able to plan more long-term goals rather than preparing for the next pivot as we saw during the COVID years.

As an organization, the VAE has achieved some big goals over the past year. We held our first golf tournament thanks to the incredible donations from Valley Trust Insurance and many, many others. We were also able to celebrate the return of Queen City Mischief & Magic, where we shared our mission with so many local families. And for perhaps the first time in our history, we were able to provide grants to every application recommended by our review teams!

As President, I am grateful for each member of the VAE team, who dedicate their time to ensuring our teachers and students receive as many opportunities as possible to see their visions come to fruition.

I am grateful for each donor who recognizes the importance of our mission and gives so generously to our educators.

And I am so eternally grateful for our teachers. They work tirelessly to show their students that education is the ticket to go anywhere they wish to go.

As you consider your holiday giving, we ask that you consider a gift to the VAE. Every donation directly benefits educators and students in the Staunton, Augusta, and Waynesboro area. Your support will give a child a learning opportunity they may have never received before.

Have a wonderful holiday season!  
Katie Ford,  
VAE President

Pictured left to right: Katie Ford, President  
Patricia Devitt Educational Excellence Committee  
Chair

Angie Whitesell, Board Advisor



## GOLF ANYONE?

We are excited to announce that our inaugural VAE Golf Tournament was a huge success! We raised over \$9,000 and had an absolute blast!!! Every dollar raised goes to classroom grants. We would like to thank the sponsors who graciously supported us and answered our calls. There would not have been a VAE tournament without the vision and support of Valley Trust. THANK YOU. The VAE Golf Committee is already hard at work for 2023 and will host our second annual VAE Golf Tournament June 16, 2023, at The Club at Ironwood. We promise a day of fun and laughs. We will have sponsorship opportunities aplenty! We'd love to have a full field of sponsors and players this year to raise as much money to put into our classrooms as possible.

Interested in a sponsorship? Contact us at [vae@lumos.net](mailto:vae@lumos.net).

See you on the course!

Liz Fravel,  
Golf Committee Chair







## THANK YOU TO OUR GRANT SPONSORS

If you or your company would like to sponsor a grant, contact us.

### **Teresa Rich & Dan Szczecinski**

Guy Stump Elementary School

Grant title: Sensory Equipment to Benefit Students with Autism/Sensory Disorder

**Sponsored by: Anonymous Friend of VAE**

### **Heather Smith-Reeps**

T.C. McSwain Elementary School

Grant title: Finding the Balance Point: Building Mobiles & Kinetic Sculpture

**Sponsored by: The Jamin Fund - Mr. Charles Wilson Jr.**

### **Erin Hagedorn**

Kate Collins Middle School

Grant title: Unplugged & Engaged

**Sponsored by: The Jamin Fund - Mr. Charles Wilson Jr.**

### **Ben Wyrick**

S. Gordon Middle School

Grant title: Flight Simulator PC

**Sponsored by: The Jamin Fund - Mr. Charles Wilson Jr.**

### **Amanda Hall**

Westwood Elementary School

Grant title: We're Programming the Future

**Sponsored by: Jim & Pam Huggins**

### **Beth Teachey & Makannah Moore**

Valley Academy

Grant title: Growing Together: An Ongoing, Horticulture & Community Project

**Sponsored by: River Hill Farms - Ronnie & Linda Young**

### **Diane Kester**

Bessie Weller Elementary School

Grant title: What's Force Got To Do With It?

**Sponsored by: Valley Trust Insurance Group**

### **Beth Brafford**

Wilson Elementary School

Grant title: Delightful Decodables

**Sponsored by: Target**

### **Ben Wyrick**

S. Gordon Middle School

Grant title: Recording Studio, Instruments & Equipment

**Sponsored by: Dr. Richard Bolstein & Mrs. Sharon Adams**

**Thank you to Brenda Vann & Simple Elegance Catering for the wonderful food during the reception.**







**QUEEN CITY MISCHIEF & MAGIC WAS A SUCCESS!  
WE RAISED ENOUGH MONEY TO FUND  
2 CREATIVE CLASSROOM GRANTS.**



**From the VAE Board of Directors, we want to say thank you  
to our donors, sponsors and volunteers for the great  
success in 2022. It would not be possible without you.**