STUDENT LEADER

Virginia Student Council Association ■ December 2017

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What's Ahead

January 6: Rescheduled Region 4 Workshop at Woodbridge HS

January 12: Postmark deadline for early convention registration

January 12: Postmark deadline for award applications

February 9: Postmark deadline for regular convention registration

February 27: Postmark deadline for late convention registration

February 27: Convention

Semester of Service at Franklin County

This semester at Franklin County High School, our SCA coordinated four different service projects. At the beginning of the year we first did our Houston Drive for the victims of the hurricane. This ran all the way through our homecoming week as well, and along with each spirit day we assigned specific donation items to bring in. This was by far our most successful service project of the year. The whole school and most of the community joined in on it. On the day we filled the trucks, many students from different classes made a line going from inside the building all the way out to the trucks and passed each item one-by-one until they were both packed full. By the time we reached homecoming weekend, two large trucks were filled with supplies that were then driven to Houston by two of our administrators.

Students at Franklin County HS form lines to move items collected for hurricane victims from the school into a waiting truck that was then driven to Houston for donation.

Socks are the most needed but least donated items at homeless shelters. During the month of October, we did a sock drive, which we cleverly named "Socktober." We collected many pairs of socks throughout the month that we then donated to a local homeless shelter. To boost participation from our students for a good cause, we made it into a class competition. The class that donated the most socks won 10 points that got them closer to winning a pizza party at the end of the year. With another very successful drive, we saw a lot of smiling faces as we delivered boxes of socks to our local homeless shelter.

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Grassfield Holds Special Needs Fall Masquerade

Grassfield High School SCA recently teamed up with our special needs department to help organize their first ever Masquerade Fall Ball before the busy holidays. The dance was held on a Friday during our last block of the day.

SCA members volunteered to assist the girls in getting ready. We set up times to do their nails, hair, and makeup for the dance. We also helped the boys by teaching them how to tie their ties. Right before the dance, we helped them hang up decorations for this special event.

The majority of our SCA members attended the dance and had fun being with the students. At the dance, PTSA provided snacks and desserts from our culinary classes. We enjoyed dancing with the students and we made many new friends.

Our SCA is excited to team up with the special needs department for multiple future events. SCA members have learned that just simply including these students or even just

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[Story by Claire Wodack]
[Photo by Claire Wodack]

Healing Houston

Floods took over the coast of Houston on Aug. 25. Nine days of heavy rainfall and 130 mph winds left the coast of Texas in shambles. More than 200,000 students were out of school because of cancellations. Most schools were turned into shelters, and staff turned into rescuers.

After news surfaced of the devastating effects of Hurricane Harvey, local Loudoun resident Jeff Shi made the decision to step up and do everything he could to help the people of Houston.

The @SR4Houston Facebook page was born, and the response was overwhelming. The goal was to connect with churches in Houston and provide relief for those who were suffering.

Businesses all over South Riding, such as Topkick, Kiddie Academy, Jhovanna Hair Salon and many more joined the effort. Able Moving & Storage provided a 53 foot tractor trailer, and filling it with donations became the number one goal of the volunteers in the area. Many of the schools in South Riding, including FHS, held donation drives in hopes to help the residents of Houston.

"It just seemed like a natural idea to help out," SCA treasurer Katy Stefano said.

SCA announced the drive via Twitter, and students were eager to bring in their donations throughout the next week.

"I came in early to set up the boxes [on the first day], and I was like 'No one's going to come,'" Stefano said.

But to her surprise, students with bags full of clothes, school supplies, canned foods and so much more were rushing through the door Friday morning.

"More people were bringing [donations] in faster than I could set up the actual boxes. It was just very inspiring," Stefano said. "We've had buses and trucks come to pick up some of the [donations] because we have so much stuff here. It's a great thing to have."

As the week went on, boxes became bigger, and donations began to get heavier. For many students, it was important to go out of their way and give to those in need, including sophomore Rebecca O'Connor.

"We have so much, and the people that were affected by Hurricane Harvey lost pretty much everything, so [donating] was the least I could do," O'Connor said.

"A lot of people [were] being really generous," SCA historian Nathan Tiong said.

By Sept. 15, the donations from FHS were serving the people of Houston.

"[Donating] is a way to make a positive impact without putting yourself in danger," Stefano said. "Something could easily happen to us. If we were in a time of need, I think others would help us, too."

SCA will continue to do more fundraisers throughout the year to help others who are also in need. Approximately 30,000 people are still left without homes and need temporary shelter.

However, the selflessness expressed by the FHS community through the donation drive will go on to help rebuild many of the lives that were impacted by Hurricane Harvey. ■

South Lakes Connects with Elementary Students

South Lakes HS SCA members invited fifth and sixth grade students from nearby Terraset Elementary to participate in several leadership and teamwork activities during a two-hour Leadership block in December. Students participated in icebreakers, completed a service project—assembling snack bags for children at the Embry Rucker shelter in Reston—and held a newspaper fashion show, focusing on creativity and teamwork.

"The goal of our workshop was really just to empower the kids. As an elementary schooler you often feel like you're too young to make an impact, so our goal was to teach the kids that leadership can come in many forms and that the little things that you do can make a big difference.," says Kate Kaufman, junior class officer. "I also think that getting them into the high school so early makes the kids excited about their future as a leader, and they'll hopefully be enthusiastic about the leadership opportunities at South Lakes by the time they get to high school."

The Terraset students are members of Terraset Ambassadors, and were selected for their leadership potential; they participate in other activities in their school and meet weekly. South Lakes Leadership students planned and conducted the workshop, which has become an annual event.

Semester of Service (cont'd from p. 1)

Also during October, we partnered with the Put The Nail In It organization to take a vow against domestic violence. During Domestic Violence Awareness Week, we set up a nail painting station each morning so that students could stop by and paint their ring finger nail purple in order to take a stand. Along with the help of our Help Save the Next Girl club on campus, this service project was very successful and we had a lot of participation from students and faculty.

Like every year, we also partnered with the Franklin County Family Resource Center and participated in their Angel Tree Program. We "adopt" a certain number of deserving children in need and they send us their Christmas wishes. We offer some of the children's lists to different groups and clubs on our campus so that they can also help a child in need. We go shopping for each of them, purchase, and wrap several gifts to fulfill their wishes.

VSCA State Convention • March 16–18, 2018

Join us at Founders Inn, Virginia Beach

Early Registration Deadline is January 12, 2018

Ideas to Celebrate M.L. King Day

- **All Hands Together** Students find a piece of construction paper that most matches their skin color then trace their handprints. The handprints can then be arranged symbolically and displayed.
- **2018 Day of Service** Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. lived his life serving others. Following his example, millions of Americans serve on Martin Luther King Jr. Day of Service. Points of Light offers two toolkits and a searchable database of volunteering opportunities for the Martin Luther King Jr. Day of Service: *http://bit.ly/2oCVBZv*
- **Living the Dream Pledge.** Design a display and post pledges from students and staff. The King Federal Holiday Commission pledge reads as follows:

In honor of Martin Luther King, Jr.'s life and work, I pledge to do everything that I can to make America and the world a place where equality and justice, freedom, and peace will grow and flourish. I (your name) commit myself to living the dream by:

Loving; not hating,

Showing understanding; not anger,

Making peace; not war.

Visit *https://www.nationalservice.gov/mlkday* for more ideas and info.

VSCA Award Applications Due in January

VSCA member schools are invited to earn some recognition for all the great things you are doing around the Commonwealth. The annual awards packet, with instructions and forms for applying, is now available at *http://scaleader.org/* for the following award programs:

■ **Achievement Award:** This award honors member schools who promote leadership and community service through their school's Student Council activities. To be recognized, schools must apply and submit documentation of completing a variety of activities throughout the school year. The required projects must be assembled in a portfolio and reviewed by the school's principal. All member schools that complete the criteria for this award will receive the award. One project related to the state theme is required, and the number of additional required activities is five (5) for elementary schools, six (6) for middle school, and seven (7) for high schools. These activities are selected from a list of 23 possible choices. Last year, 21 schools received the Achievement Award at the annual Convention.

■ **Outstanding Student Council Project:** Each member school in attendance at the annual Convention will be eligible to select and display one project that was completed during the 2017–2018 school year. Projects selected should relate to the VSCA theme "Grow a Generation to Lead the Nation" and be selected from among the top three "Required Projects" listed in the Achievement Award information. Projects will be on display throughout the weekend to further highlight and recognize the hard work completed by SCA students from all over the Commonwealth. Schools interested in displaying an outstanding project must register with the state office no later than March 9, 2018 to allow time for display assignments. For additional details consult the awards packet on the website.

■ **Advisor of the Year:** Three advisors (one at each level – elementary, middle, and high) who have done an exemplary job in promoting and fostering student councils with their continued support and participation are recognized at the annual convention as advisor of the year. The honorees are chosen by the VSCA Advisory Committee based on letters of recommendation from the school's principal and student council officer. Nominations must be made on the official nomination form and postmarked by January 12, 2018. The Advisor of the Year at the middle or high school level may also be chosen by the VSCA Advisory Committee as Virginia's nominee for the national Warren E. Shull Advisor of the Year Award, given annually and based on criteria established by the National Association of Student Councils.

■ **Administrator of the Year:** Each year, VSCA recognizes one principal or assistant principal at each level (elementary, middle, and high) in the state who has made an impact in their school's Student Council through continued support and participation. The honoree is chosen by the VSCA Advisory Committee and the VASSP Board of Directors based on letters of recommendation from the school's student council advisor, student council officer, and division superintendent. Nominations must be made on the official nomination form and postmarked by January 12, 2018.

Masquerade Fall Ball (cont'd from p.1)

waving to them in the hallway makes them so happy. We have learned that a little bit of kindness goes a long way. We hope that these simple gestures will spread throughout the student body at Grassfield High School and will make for an all-inclusive and welcoming environment at our school.

Grassfield HS student council members collaborated with the special needs department to help organize their first Masquerade Fall Ball. SCA members did hair and makeup before the event and attended the ball to dance with their special needs peers. The SCA hopes to create an all-inclusive and welcoming environment at their school.