STUDENT LEADER

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VSCA is a leadership program of the Virginia Association of Secondary School Principals and is located at the VASSP state office in Richmond, Virginia:
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Leaders Develop School Pride

By Joel Diaz

Having pride in your school can be one of the most motivating aspects of student leadership. It can drive young leaders to host great events, organize exciting pep rallies, and cheer till their vocal chords are shredded. However, the most crucial part of school pride, which can often be overlooked, is having pride in the men, women, peers, admin, and staff that make up the school. Appreciating the members of the school is just as important for school pride as pep rallies and tailgates, if not more.

Appreciation can give the members of the school a feeling of acceptance, which will in turn foster in them a sense of school pride. There are many different ways to show appreciation to the members of the school community; following are just a few that we practice at Woodbridge Senior High School.

Woodbridge High School student goverment members focus on developing pride in their school through appreciating the members of the school community.

The Dreaming Differently Project

Woodbridge, along with several other schools in our county, is proud to have a Special Ed athletics program that is run by our Special Education department. The first sport season organized was basketball. The team would practice a few times a week and play games during flex against other schools that had the same program. The Dreaming Differently Project was organized by members of our Student Activities Leadership Council (SALC) with the idea to show appreciation to a group that is often not as well represented in our school, the Special Education department.

The premise of the project was to get the word out about

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Get Energized at Nearby Regional Workshops

VSCA offers regional workshops each fall as an affordable way to help your student council members gain new ideas, develop relationships with students from other schools, learn leadership skills, and go back to school energized to tackle the work of student council.

This year's workshops are being sponsored by the regional representative schools at the following places and dates:

Region 1: Prince George High School, December 8

Region 2: Grassfield High School, November 10

Region 3: Massaponax High School, November 10

Region 4: South Lakes High School, December 15

Regions 5–8: Liberty High School, November 10

The cost to attend the workshop is just $15 per person, which includes lunch. Registration deadlines are October 31 for tregions 2, 3, and 5–8 and November 15 for regions 1 and 4. Check the VSCA website at *www.scaleader.org* for registration information.

Hollywood Homecoming: A Box Office Hit!

By Neeharika Yallayi

Once a year, Freedom High School holds its annual Homecoming dance, which brings an incredible amount of spirit, and unifies our community through the shared excitement of the student body. This year, Freedom broke a ticket-selling record, making it one of the most successful Homecoming Weeks ever held at Freedom.

The theme chosen for the 2018–2019 Homecoming dance was "Hollywood Homecoming," with the sub-themes for each class being different genres of movies:

- Senior class representatives chose a musical genre, and decorated their hallway with a series of both nostalgic and iconic broadway shows and movies.
- Juniors chose thriller movies, and brought chills to both upper and underclassmen with their frightening hallway decorations.
- Sophomores took it to the future with Sci-Fi for their genre.
- Freshmen chose Western movies, bringing a Texan feel to the school.

Something new we incorporated this year with our spirit days were spirit points. These spirit points were used to see which class was participating the most for the spirit days. Within each lunch period, spirit tallies were collected by the representatives of our SCA, and then were added together per grade to contribute to each class' spirit points. This encouraged the community in our school to participate, so their class could win.

Our spirit days for Homecoming Week were Decades Day, Cali Day, Pink Day, Class Theme Day, and Class Color. These spirit days were specifically chosen to bring some connection with the overall theme of our dance. We had a large amount of participation, which radiated an exuberant amount of enthusiasm and exhilaration through our students and staff.

Ending Homecoming Week off on a positive note, the Homecoming Dance was finally here. Approximately 1,300 students attended our dance, which was the most participation we have ever had. The night before the dance our entire SCA came together and decorated with decorations such as a giant clapboard, a red carpet, and Hollywood stars to showcase our theme. This year was one of the most successful Homecomings because of our hard work and dedication that went into making it one of the most memorable weeks yet.

Pep Rally Showcases Oscar Smith Spirit

By Vivian Lu

What's a better way to celebrate school spirit than a pep rally? A pep rally is a great way for the school to gather together and have the student body cheer on such fall athletes as the volleyball team, the field hockey team, the band, the color-guard, the golf team, and the cross-country team—but most importantly hyping up our football players for the big game of the night, along with getting the student body excited and pumped about the Homecoming game.

At Oscar F. Smith High School, the pep rally is one of the biggest events we hold to get the student body excited and hyped for the Homecoming game, which takes place later that night. The pep rally usually takes place on a Friday and we have our spirit day of wearing our school colors of blue and gold to show our spirit. We also paint our faces blue and gold and wear blue and gold spirit beads.

Along with giving recognition to athletes, we also want our student body to feel involved, so we play a series of competitive games that include a tug-of-war, pie in the face, and a screaming contest. We also introduce our Homecoming court and introduce the students who have the potential of winning Homecoming queen and Mr. T. We also like to get the teachers involved, and students nominate the teachers they love so they also can win Homecoming queen and king. Students are anxious to find out the Homecoming queen and Mr.T, however we announce the winners at the game, and this helps encourage more people to come out to the football game.

The pep rally is one of the greatest events we hold, because it is a time where the students of Oscar Smith High School can come together as one, and show spirit and cheer for their school and athletes on Homecoming.

Trunk or Treat Brings School and Community Together

Last year Lee-Davis SCA decided we needed an event that involved both the local community and the school community. We decided to have a Trunk or Treat the Thursday prior to Halloween. SCA chose the theme of Disney movies and SCA leaders met with all the other club leaders to brainstorm. Each club chose a movie that best represented that club. For example, French Club choose Beauty and the Beast, Latin Club chose Hercules. SCA sent flyers to all of the feeder elementary schools to advertise the event. SCA also numbered the parking spaces in the parking lot and assigned each club two spaces.

For the event, SCA organized all of the set up. Each club had a car decorated to their movie theme. Each club also had a small, easy game set up. The club members dressed in character and handed out candy to the children.

This event was free to the community and brought the school and the community together. We are making this an annual event.

South Lakes Changes Homecoming Court Tradition

In recent years South Lakes High School faced many challenges with the way its Homecoming Court operated. Low participation in voting, a reluctance on the part of people who were nominated to participate, determining how to handle gender roles, and the general perception that it was just a meaningless popularity contest all contributed to the decision to do something different this year.

After much discussion and careful consideration—including a student Twitter poll in which 68% of students said the court tradition was " boring, let's change it"—the SLHS student leadership decided to do away with Homecoming King and Queen and class royalty and replace them with a Spirit Court. During Spirit Week, students who dressed up according to the theme of the day were nominated by their peers via a Google form. The link to the form was widely circulated with a QR code, and SGA members who went around to first block classes to count participation kept their eye out for people to nominate as well. Nomination was as easy as sending a photo of the student in their outfit along with the student's name and grade.

"We believe this process will make it more of an honor to be on court—people will actually be recognized for something besides how popular they are—and will help ensure people will actually want to be on court," said Logan King, Court chairperson, in the proposal to SLHS administration asking for the change.

The change was overwhelmingly popular, with more than 300 nominations recorded. SGA members selected two finalists per class selected, with no regard to gender. Some classes had two males or two females as finalists; it all depended on how spirited nominees were during the week.

Finalists were announced on Thursday afternoon and students were reminded that voting for the one Spirit Ruler to rule them all would take place during Friday's pep rally. On Friday at the rally, the finalists were introduced at the beginning of the rally and paraded around the gym in their class color day outfits. Then students took out their phones and voted right there for their choice for Spirit Ruler using a shortened link that was also accessible via a Remind text sent out. The Spirit Ruler was announced and crowned at the end of the rally.

SGA members credited the new Spirit Court for ramping up the spirit and participation in spirit week activities. "We definitely are doing it again next year!" said King.

School Pride (cont'd from p. 1)

the new athletics program and to encourage people to attend the games. Fortunately, the games, which were held during flex, ended up having the bleachers filled with kids eager to motivate the hard-working athletes for nearly every game. The Dreaming Differently Project was able to provide shirts for the athletes along with holding an end of the year banquet including awards and plenty of food. Our SALC did this so the kids in the program felt accepted and appreciated, and the payoff was huge—being able to see the gratitude in the faces of the Special Ed athletes.

Celebrate Each Other

Keeping with the theme of appreciating the "unseen," this project also was run by members of our SALC. SALC secretly selected three organizations within our school to "appreciate one another." It started with football, whose team members visited our Robotics club while they were meeting after school to let Robotics members know they were proud of them and all they've been able to accomplish. Robotics was very thankful, especially when they feel as though their dedication and many successes often go unseen.

Robotics then kept the ball rolling by crashing a Key Club meeting with food, encouragement, and helping hands. Key Club then brought it full circle visiting the football team while they were reviewing film. They presented the team with a plaque and congratulations on an outstanding season. In the end, all organizations were very thankful that others would go out of their way to show them their appreciation.

Here at Woodbridge Senior High, we are all about school pride–to understand this, just look at our student section. That's why we make it a point to show everyone that they are appreciated, because you can't have pride in your school until you have pride in your population. These are just a few of the many ways that we show appreciation for all the people that make up our great school, and we are excited to see how many more you can come up with!