STUDENT LEADER

Virginia Student Council Association ■ March 2019

What's Inside

Spring Festival at Colgan ... 2

Hickory Adds RAK to Traditional Activities 2

Battlefield Creates Reflection Garden..... 3

Essex Ends Year with Ohana Luau..... 4

Prince George Seniors Say Aloha Adulthood..... 4

10 Things to Know About VSCA's Convention..... 4

What's Ahead

March 22–24: 93rd VSCA State Convention at Founder's Inn, Virginia Beach

June 21–24: VSCA delegation heads to South Fayette HS in McDonald, PA, for the National Student Council Conference

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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Spring Into Action

With the longer daylight hours and warmer temperatures of spring come many opportunities to help others and express appreciation. Consider some of the following as you plan your spring calendar.

■ **Prom Dress Swap.** Help out students who might be struggling to meet the expenses to attend prom by hosting a prom dress swap. Invite girls from your school and neighboring schools to bring in gently used dresses to swap on a Saturday in early April. Participants could turn in a dress before the swap (to allow time to get things organized) and receive a ticket to pick out a dress of equivalent value on the day of the swap. Organize the school gym or cafeteria with hanging racks where the dresses are organized by size. Be sure to have full length mirrors available and changing rooms set up. Make some money for your organization by selling refreshments and offering space for local prom-related businesses to advertize their services. Check *https://www.dosomething.org/us/campaigns/prom-for-all/action* for additional ideas.

■ **National Volunteer Week Celebration.** Recognize and celebrate the efforts of volunteers at your school with a breakfast or luncheon during National Volunteer Week, April 7–13, 2019. Visit *ww2.pointsoflight.org* to find out more about National Volunteer Week and find out how you can make a difference.

■ **National Student Leadership Week.** Plan activities for National Student Leadership Week, 21–27 to recognize your school's student leaders for their outstanding efforts, honorable achievements, and their leadership in representing their peers and giving voice to student concerns. this year's theme, "Student Leaders: Taking Charge" empowers students to use their voice and agency to improve the culture in their schools and communities. For ideas visit *https://www.natstuco.org/events/national-student-leadership-week/*

24 Schools Earn VSCA Achievement Award

Each year, VSCA honors member schools that promote leadership and community service through their school's Student Council activities by awarding an Achievement Award. This year, 24 schools will be recognized at the 93rd annual VSCA Convention for their achievements.

To be recognized, schools must apply and submit documentation of completing a variety of activities throughout the school year. Activities include such things as conducting a school project based on this year's theme, "Lighting the Fire of Leadership," hosting a leadership workshop, organizing a school-wide service project, holding a student council-sponsored assembly, organizing a food drive, conducting regular SCA meetings, participating in VSCA regional or state meetings, and more.

The required projects must be assembled in a portfolio and reviewed by the school

continued on page 3

Spring Festival at Colgan

By: Brigit Turner, 2019 VSCA Advisory Committee Member

Charles J. Colgan Sr. High School has been open for only three years. Having students from different schools come together and try to become unified—for some half way through their high school career—is hard. In an effort to bring current and rising students together and have a fun way to meet all the student organizations, Colgan's Class of 2019 organized the Spring Festival.

The Spring Festival took place in April in the school's stadium. Each club and sport had the opportunity to set up a booth with a game and information regarding their organization. Almost 30 clubs and sports participated. As an incentive to get organizations to participate, the Class of 2019 sold tickets that could be used at the booths to play the games. At the end of the event the tickets collected by each booth were counted and converted to money for that organization. Because Colgan is so new, a lot of organizations had very little funds to do the projects they wanted to do. The Spring Festival was a fun and easy way for them to raise funds.

To draw the biggest crowd, there needed to be a main event. The Class of 2018 was in charge of organizing a powderpuff football game between the classes. The football game was advertised along with the many other games at the festival. Games included such activities as throwing a water balloon at a student, throwing food at a teacher, face painting, skeeball, and so many others. From admission, concessions, and ticket sales the Spring Festival raised more than $3,000! The money was used for prom, graduation, and other events.

Colgan's Spring Festival featured a powderpuff football game and activities such as throwing a water balloon at a student (below right). Clubs such as NHS (below left) were able to raise money for their organizations. More than $3,000 was raised.

Hickory HS Adds Random Acts of Kindness to Traditional Activities

By Hailey Smith, 2019 VSCA Advisory Committee Member

Hickory High School has started many new traditions while continuing our old ones. One of our new additions was Kindness Week. The week of February 12 through February 16 was nationally known as Kindness Week, so Hickory SCA took this as an opportunity to spread a little kindness around campus.

Throughout the week we planned little activities that the students could participate in and hopefully walk away from with a smile. On Monday, we started by handing out candy and stickers between classes at the "Random Act of Kindness" (RAK) table. To continue spreading the kindness into Tuesday, we started off the morning handing out donuts and coffee. The next day happened to be Valentine's Day, so we set up a game for students to play at lunch. Each student got half a heart with a celebrity's name and had to find the matching spouse. Prizes were handed out to everyone who found their match. On Thursday, we went back to the "Random Act of Kindness" table to hand out Laffy Taffy candy between classes. To finish out the week strong, we had Free Hugs Friday and handed out the Little Hug Fruit Barrels at our RAK table. The environment around campus was noticeably better. Seeing all the joy and smiles around our school made all of our hard work for the week worth it.

Battlefield Students Remember Fallen Bobcats with Reflection Garden

By Aden Beyene, 2019 VSCA Advisory Committee Member

Former Battlefield High School principal, Ms. Ethridge-Conti, called a group of SCA officers into her office to talk about a pressing matter afflicting the school's culture and climate. Over the course of the 2015–2016 school year, there were three suicides within the Battlefield community. Ms. Ethridge-Conti turned to the SCA to come up with a way to remember the Bobcats we had lost while also bringing hope to the Battlefield community. It was in this room that the Bobcat Reflection Garden idea was born.

With the support of the principal, SCA Vice President Thomas DeAngelus took on the project. The two picked out the location for the garden and drew up a design with the help of Merrifield Garden Center. As the school year was coming to an end, Ms. Ethridge-Conti announced her retirement and DeAngelus was prepping for his graduation that year. This left the Bobcat Reflection Garden without any leadership.

Class of 2019 President, Kirt Boyd, had a lot of ideas regarding the Bobcat Reflection Garden and voiced them to incoming principal Mr. Ferrera via email. Mr. Ferrera, "immediately jumped on board and was eager to help and make it happen," said Boyd who is now the SCA president for Battlefield High School. Their efforts were joined by Mrs. Parsons who had a personal connection to the garden. She had lost her son, Nick Parsons, in the 2015–2016 school year. As a group, Boyd, Mrs. Parsons, and Mr. Ferrera, along with Prince William County School's approval, took the first steps in constructing the garden.

Bobcat Reflection Garden Committee members meet over the summer to clear algae from the garden's waterfall.

Their first step was finalizing a design. Although the group appreciated the efforts made by De Angelus and Ms. Ethridge-Conti, they decided to go with an alternate design and location. Next, the SCA worked with various individuals and organizations including Blue River Koi, Outdoor Solutions, and Mr. Thorpe from Thorpe Landscaping to make the garden a reality. Additionally, an Eagle scout by the name Lane Tomlinson offered to construct benches for the garden, which are now placed around the garden allowing students a place to sit. While all aspects to the garden are magnificent, there is one feature that has students especially buzzing. The main centerpiece of the garden is a large waterfall made by Outdoor Solutions.

Currently, the reflection garden is still under construction with new additions being added. The Bobcat Reflection Garden Committee has been tasked with the maintenance and upkeep of the garden over the course of this past summer to ensure it remained in pristine condition when school re-opens. It is common to see Battlefield students sitting and enjoying the garden and what it stands for. The intention behind the garden grew to include the loss of Battlefield Bobcats by any cause. This is especially impactful for Battlefield students with the recent loss of another student. Perhaps the best way to convey what the garden means to the community is through the reflection garden's slogan: Remembering our fallen Bobcats today and reminding them that tomorrow's a new day of hope. In the words of the Bobcat Reflection Garden Committee's founder Kirt Boyd, "The Bobcat Reflection Garden is a symbol of hope."

Achievement Award (from p. 1)

principal to be considered for an award. From 26 listed activities a high school must complete eight items, a middle school must complete seven, and an elementary school must complete six to be eligible for the award. All member schools that complete the criteria for this award receive the award.

Congratulations to the 2019 recipients for this outstanding achievement:

Battlefield HS

Benton MS

Blair MS

Buckingham County HS

Buffalo Gap HS

C.D. Hylton HS

Courtland HS

Franklin County HS

Freedom HS

Grassfield HS

Hayfield Elementary

Hickory HS

Hugo A Owens MS

Liberty HS

Massaponax HS

Orange County HS

Osbourn HS

Oscar Smith MS

Patrick Henry HS

South Lakes HS

Tomahawk Creek MS

Western Branch MS

Woodbridge HS

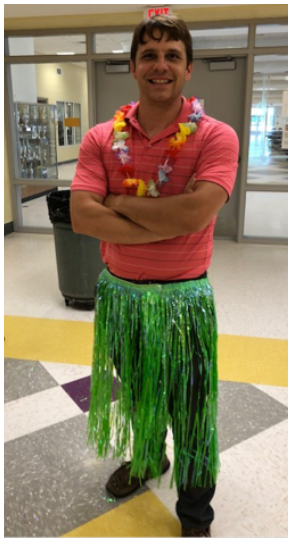
Woodgrove HS

Essex Ends Year with Ohana Luau

At Essex High School the theme for the 2017–2018 school year was "Ohana." Anyone who has seen the Disney movie *Lilo & Stitch* knows Ohana means family and family means no one gets left behind. All year Essex embodied this phrase to the fullest with several different examples, but one of the best was the end of the year Ohana Luau.

Dealing with tedious stress from SOLs, exams, and overall school in general, the Student Council Association believed the students deserved a celebration for everything they had accomplished and overcome during the year. The SCA executive officers partnered with the school's PBIS team to find a way to celebrate and honor the students, and then secretly met with administration to bring the vision to life.

The event took place on June 8, the Friday before the last week of school. At 1:30 the office started calling students down to the gym to start our Ohana Luau. At the Luau there was an inflatable slide and obstacle course in the gym, a photo booth and corn hole boards set up in the cafeteria, and a Kona Ice truck was outside. The SCA and PBIS handed out t-shirts, leis, grass skirts, and tickets to get a free Kona ice.



This event brought together our students and our theme perfectly. Our entire student body, grades 8 to 12, were together enjoying each other and the activities around them. We truly are one family.

Prince George Seniors Say Aloha Adulthood!

Prince George High School Class of 2018 went out with a bang at their end-of-year Hawaiian-themed celebration. Planned by Student Government Seniors, the senior bash included food, drinks, music, extravagant décor, and Hawaiian attire to show their school spirit one last time. Many teachers also participated in the celebration and even some competitive games of cornhole.

In addition to the senior bash, Seniors also donated their annual farewell gift to the school. Student Government Seniors revamped the outside cafeteria patio by painting picnic tables and planting flowers to beautify the area for future Royals to enjoy their lunch outdoors.

10 Things to Know about VSCA's State Convention

1. A record number of participants will be "Lighting the Fire of Leadership" as we head to the Founders Inn of Virginia Beach, March 22–24, 2019.

2. The conference will feature inspirational speakers, student led workshops, idea sharing sessions, regional meetings, a swag swap, a service project, and more!

3. We'll be electing new state officers and regional reps who will serve for the 2019–2020 year.

4. People will be making "fringie friends" from all around the Commonwealth. See the video at *http://scaleader.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/How-to-Make-a-Fringie.mp4* if you don't know how to make one.

5. Student leaders will have the opportunity to voice their opinions and concerns on a variety of topics to members of the Virginia Board of Education.

6. It's your chance to impact lasting change within the Commonwealth by debating and voting on resolutions proposed by the Advisory Committee. These will be sent to the appropriate governing body, usually the Virginia General Assembly.

7. A featured display of some of the best activities sponsored by SGAs around the state will help you gain new ideas to take back to your school.

8. Fun, fresh pep rally competitions will pump up the regional spirit and get you started planning your school's next pep rally.

9. The banquet on Saturday evening is a great chance to get dressed up and have a nice dinner with your fellow council members and new VSCA friends while honoring the outstanding principal and adviser of the year.

10. You'll have a memorable time at the Dance Party after the banquet—it rocks! When else can you dance with hundreds of people who actually get out there and dance!?