STUDENT LEADER

Virginia Student Council Association ■ December/January 2020

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What's Ahead

January 10: Postmark deadline for early convention registration

February 7: Postmark deadline for regular convention registration

February 13: Convention hotel registration deadline

February 21: Postmark deadline for late convention registration

March 1: Deadline to register for consideration for the Outstanding Student Council Project Award

Delegates Get Inspired at Convention

VSCA member schools are invited to get energized and inspired at the 94th annual state convention, March 13–15, 2020 at the Founders Inn in Virginia Beach. This year, VSCA is pleased to welcome Kate Garnes, DJ and performer for Walt Disney World, as the keynote speaker.

In addition to general sessions featuring the motivational Garnes, delegates can look forward to "all of the other networking opportunities that come with attending convention," says VSCA director Andrea Vail. These opportunities include regional meetings, idea exchange sessions, and learning labs featuring presentations from student leaders and advisers on such topics as fundraising, service projects, parliamentary procedure, enhancing school spirit, teambuilding, and more. The convention also includes fun events such as a pep rally, banquet, and a dance party.

Convention delegates from Region 4 prepare for the pep rally at the 2019 VSCA Convention.

Last year nearly 700 delegates attended the convention from schools across the Commonwealth.

A unique feature of the VSCA convention is the opportunity for delegates to debate and amend resolutions that will be voted on by the student leaders at convention and then forwarded to the educational leaders of the Commonwealth. An open forum with representatives of the state Board of Education also gives student leaders a chance to voice their concerns about education issues.

Participants at convention elect state officers who will represent their interests at the next level. Elections will be held for president, vice president, secretary, and high school representative (8 positions), middle level representative (3

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State Service Project: Picture Perfect Birthday

The VSCA state service project for 2019–2020 is Picture Perfect Birthday, an effort to help kids in foster homes and homeless shelters have a memorable birthday.

The idea, voted on by the VSCA Advisory Council members, is to create a birthday party in a bag featuring balloons, streamers, noisemakers, miscellaneous toys, and a decorated picture frame to help permanently capture the moment. School delegations are asked to donate supplies for the bags, and delegates to the state convention in March will decorate the picture frames with birthday wishes, inspirational messages, stickers, and so forth.

The completed bags will be delivered to homeless shelters and foster homes across the Commonwealth after the state convention.

Check with your regional representative to find out what your region is assigned to bring.

Start the Year Off Right with Some New Activities

Looking for some good ideas to start the year off right when you come back from winter break? Try one of these ideas for January:

Lost and Found Fashion Show

Clear out all the items that have accumulated so far this year in the lost and found by holding a humorous fashion show during lunch using only items from the school's lost and found.

Toy Drive

After the holidays, many kids are ready to find new homes for their gently used toys. Hold a collection day and donate the toys to a local shelter.

Ultimate Frisbee Tournament

The first Frisbees by Wham-O were produced on January 13, 1957. In honor of this date, sponsor an ultimate Frisbee tournament in the snow for teams from each class during lunch or after school.

MLK Day of Service

Organize a local service project for the Martin Luther King, Jr., holiday and join the tradition of making it a day on, not a day off. For ideas and resources visit *www.nationalservice.gov/serve-your-community/mlk-day-service*

SOUPER BOWL OF CARING℠

tacklehunger.org

Souper Bowl of Caring

More than 37 million people struggle with hunger in the United States, including more than 11 million children. That's why Souper Bowl of Caring mobilizes young people each year to tackle hunger by collecting dollars and cans of food during Super Bowl weekend, then donate 100% of their collection to hunger-relief charities in their own communities. For more information and free resources to join this effort visit *www.souperbowl.org.*

Finals Care Packages

Help freshmen survive their first round of midyear exams by preparing care packages with a list of tips for studying, snacks, pens, and other goodies. Deliver one to every freshman in the school with good luck wishes for their exams.

Healthy Weight Week

During Healthy Weight Week, January 19–25, 2020, invite area health care providers to set up displays during lunch about healthy eating habits, exercise, and healthy weight.

Puzzle Power

In honor of National Jigsaw Puzzle Day, January 29, give pieces of a jigsaw puzzle to every member of a grade level (or classroom if your grades are too large). Provide an area for puzzle assembly and have a contest to see which grade can get its puzzle put together first by having students stop by to insert their piece. Offer good prizes as an incentive for everyone to participate and make the point that "the puzzle isn't complete without you."

Random Acts of Kindness

Make kindness the norm at your school with ideas and resources from Random Acts of Kindness at *www.randomactsofkindness.org.* Random Acts of Kindness Day is February 17, but the site has monthly calendars with ideas for every day of the year, along with posters—such as the 50+ Ways to Be Kind poster shown at right—and other resources to promote kindness all year at your school.

Slice of Pi

Work with your math department to celebrate National Pi Day, March 14 (or 3.14) with some lunchtime math games. Serve a free piece of pie to any student who participates.

Kick Butts Day

Organize an awareness project on the dangers of juuling for Kick Butts Day, March 18. For activity ideas and resources visit *http://kickbuttsday.org*

Global Youth Traffic Safety Month

Plan a project to put the brakes on impaired driving for Global Youth Traffic Safety Month during May. Visit *www.noys.org* for ideas and resources.

VSCA State Convention

March 13–15, 2020

Join us at Founders Inn, Virginia Beach

Early Registration Deadline is

January 10, 2020

Grassfield Engages Fans with Themed Games

At Grassfield, football games are the place to be. All through the Fall season, students get excited to attend the football games on Friday nights all decked out in spirit wear. This year, Grassfield SCA realized how little the student body recognizes other sport teams in comparison to football. Student officers met with the athletic director to discuss some ways to get students to attend the basketball games, considering previous years have had very poor student attendance.

Brainstorming produced many new ideas such as reduced ticket amounts, halftime competitions, and themed games. So far, Grassfield has held two themed basketball games. The first one was greatly successful, as it was held on a Friday night with a ticket price of two dollars. Students came to the game decked out in USA spirit wear. The athletic director, SCA students, and basketball team were happy to see such a large turnout.

The next themed game was called "Twin Night" in which students came dressed alike in pairs for a reduced ticket price. At halftime, there was a half-court shot competition where the students played for a prize. The basketball games with themes have been a hit at Grassfield for the whole community and students and teachers are excited to see what else will come from this new event in the future.

Grassfield students display their USA themed spirit wear at one of two themed basketball games designed to increase student attendance.

Coffee with a Cop at Lee-Davis

A great way to build positive relationships in the community between students and police officers is by giving the opportunity to create a conversation between the two. It also allows SCA to show its appreciation to an important part of every community. This is exactly what Lee-Davis High School had in mind when they started the tradition of Coffee with a Cop.

Once a year police officers from around the community come to the school for doughnuts, fruit, and coffee while being able to meet and converse with members of the student council. To keep the conversation interesting, the advisers created cards with conversation questions and topics. This helps break the ice and lets the students and officers get to know each other a little better. Though it can be intimidating at first, the morning always ends with smiles and new friendships being made.

SCA member and officer Hollyann Purvis says that she "loves the relationship formed between two groups that usually aren't known to have one...it helps [her] feel more connected to the community." This event is something looked forward to by both SCA members and police officers. It allows positive relationships to be made between two parties that aren't usually thought to get along. Students are able to say thanks to the people who help protect them and provide an enormous amount to their community. This year council members are already working on ways to have more officers and students involved and make the event even better.

National Council of Excellence Applications Due in February

With only a month remaining until the deadline to submit NatStuCo Councils of Excellence applications, it is time for your student council members to organize information on projects, minutes and agendas of meetings, and other information that can be used to support your council's application to NSC as a National Council of Excellence for 2020.

Similar to VSCA's Achievement Award, the Councils of Excellence Award recognizes achievements for the calendar year. There are two levels of recognition: A student council achieves a National Council of Excellence Award when it has demonstrated that it meets all the National Student Council requirements, and the National Gold Council of Excellence award is awarded to those councils that demonstrate the highest levels of leadership as well as meet additional standards as set by NatStuCo. All schools that demonstrate that they meet the requirements receive the award.

Many VSCA member councils have done outstanding things since January 1, 2020. VSCA would like to encourage all councils to apply for this prestigious award. Details on the application process and the appropriate forms can be found at *www.natstuco.org.* The application, based on the council's accomplishments for calendar year 2019, is due to NASC on February 18, 2020.

Prince William County Penny War Fundraiser

By Aden Beyene, 2020 VSCA Advisory Committee Member

The 2018–2019 academic year was a historic one for the student councils in Prince William County. Under the direction of PWCS School Board Student Representative Sasan Faraj, the presidents from the 12 high schools in Prince William County met for the first time at the Kelly Leadership Center. The group was assembled to discuss ways in which school spirit could be improved across the county, in addition to providing all present parties a forum to voice any concerns they, or the students they represent, may have. The meeting was a great success.

The group began with introductions and then jumped right into discussion. Topics ranged from decorating graduation caps, to hosting a county unified prom. One topic of great importance was brought to the meeting by Battlefield High School President Kirt Boyd. Battlefield SCA intended to host a county-wide fundraiser for a school in Puerto Rico that was affected by the hurricanes. Boyd presented the idea and provided the group with options.

The first option was for each school to hold a penny war during the same week and the money raised would be pulled together to be donated to the school. The second option was for schools to hold a clothing drive then turn the donated clothes in to Clothes for Change, which is an organization that gives 50 cents for each clothing item donated. The money returned would then be donated to the school. The last option was for schools to independently hold some type of fundraiser, creativity encouraged, and at the end of April all the money would be collected and donated under the name of PWCS Student Councils. The group unanimously decided to go with option 1, or the penny wars route.

In the following group meetings, a concrete plan was hatched. Each school would host their penny war in the week after Spring Break. A penny war is by nature a competition amongst classes to see which class can earn the most points. Each penny counts for a single point and each class has a jar to collect the money. However, anything aside from a penny is considered sabotage money, wherein if silver coins or dollars are placed in a classes' jar by another class, they lose points. In addition, schools within PWCS were pitted against each other to see which school could raise the most money.

Some schools within the region were unfortunately unable to participate; four schools did participate. School presidents were charged with calculating totals of money raised at the end of each day and uploading them to a spreadsheet that was shared amongst participating schools. At the end of the week, Battlefield High School reigned supreme with a total of $134.01 raised, followed by Stonewall Jackson High School in second place, then Forest Park High School and finally Patriot High School. In total, the schools raised $201.71 dollars.

Out of generosity, the Battlefield High Schools student council adviser, Joe Schelzo, decided to round the total raised up to $500 and the money was then sent to the school in Puerto Rico. This fundraiser was not only a benefit to the school, but also to the county as it paved the way for more inter-county projects and workings. It was a great step toward Prince William County unification and collaboration.

Outstanding Project Award

Each member school in attendance at the VSCA Convention is encouraged to select and display one project that was completed during the 2019–2020 school year for consideration as the Outstanding Student Council Project Award.

Projects selected should relate to the year's VSCA theme "Sharing the Vision of Leadership" and should be selected from among the top three Required Projects listed in the Achievement Award description. Projects will be on display throughout the weekend to further highlight and recognize the hard work completed by student council leaders from around the Commonwealth. These displays also will create an excellent opportunity to share ideas for new projects with other schools.

One school's display from each level(elementary, middle and high) will be selected as the recipient of the Outstanding Student Council Project Award, which will be awarded at the banquet on Saturday night at the Convention.

Convention (from p. 1)

positions), and elementary level representative (3 positions). Candidates for these positions will campaign during the convention. Schools, once elected, will be represented on the VSCA Advisory Committee by a student and the school's SCA adviser, who will be jointly responsible for fulfilling all duties of office.

"Most advisors who attend the VSCA convention realize that it unites their student council and gives them ideas about how to effectively plan for the future," says Vail. "The VSCA convention is an event not to be missed by any student or advisor dedicated to the principles of student leadership."

Early bird registrations for the 2020 Convention must be postmarked by January 10, 2020, and regular registrations must be postmarked by February 7. No registrations will be accepted after February 21. Information and registration forms are available on the VSCA website at *www.scaleader.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/2020-Convention-Registration-Packet.pdf*