



## The Student Leader

*The newsletter of the oldest state student council leadership organization in the nation.*

January 2010

### GREAT NEWS!!

For the first time in the history of the Virginia Student Councils Association State Convention, the student leaders will have an open forum with the Virginia Board of Education!

The leaders at the VSCA Convention will serve as a liaison between the students of Virginia and the Board. This will help the Board members to understand the concerns and issues facing students, and give fresh perspectives to the Board members. Since the VSCA Convention is a gathering of leaders throughout the state, this will allow our diversity to serve as a collective voice to provide feasible solutions. The current plan is to use part of the time in the Convention normally set aside for resolutions to serve as the open forum period.

This opportunity to communicate constructively with the Board of Education gives the students at the VSCA Convention another chance to serve in a leadership role. I would encourage any advisers who believe in active student leadership to attend the VSCA Convention, April 1 – 3, 2011. Never before has there been such an opportunity as this for your student leaders to have an active voice in school governance.

### Don't forget...Convention is coming soon!

#### Important Dates to Remember:

January 31	Postmark Deadline for:	Elections Forms
February 18	Postmark Deadline for:	Early Registration Deadline
March 4	Postmark Deadline for:	Achievement Award Administrator of the Year Adviser of the Year Call for Presentations Registration Deadline Hotel Registration Deadline
April 1 – 3		85 <sup>th</sup> Annual VSCA State Convention, Williamsburg

*Mike Nelson, VSCA Director*

#### VSCA State Office

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#### LEADERSHIP WORKSHOPS

**January 8** - Region 2  
Grassfield H.S.  
Chesapeake Division

**January 8** - Region 8  
Woodgrove H.S.  
Loudoun Division

**January 15** - Region 5 and 8  
Buckingham H.S.  
Buckingham Division

**January 29** – Region 1  
Prince George H.S.  
Prince George Division

**If you want to develop an even more phenomenal and active Student Council, plan on attending the State Convention which you can learn more about in this newsletter!**

## VSCA STATE CONVENTION

April 1-3, 2011

Williamsburg Marriott

Williamsburg, VA

\*\*Begin to make your plans for the VSCA State Convention.\*\*

\*\*State Convention will be held at the Williamsburg Marriott  
April 1-3, 2011.\*\*

\*\*Elementary, Middle and High Schools are included.\*\*

\*\*State Convention features team building activities, opportunities to learn from other students and advisers, motivational speakers, a state service project, workshops on numerous SCA topics, an awards banquet, a dance, opportunities to network with students and advisers from your region and other parts of the state, state officer campaigns and elections, and resolution workshops. This is far from a complete list of all the exciting opportunities at Convention.\*\*

\*\*Convention really helps to unite student councils and give them a sense of purpose. For many advisers, attending the VSCA State Convention is an indispensable activity for their student leaders.\*\*

\*\*More information will be posted on our soon to be established Web site at [www.scaleader.org](http://www.scaleader.org).  
Meanwhile, check out our information posted at <http://www.vassp.org/vsca.html>.\*\*

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### VSCA STATE CONVENTION KEYNOTE SPEAKER



With a common name like "Mike Smith," you might get the idea that our Convention Keynote speaker is a common man. But what you will find out at Convention this year is that, THIS Mike is a most UNcommon individual - which is why people call him The "Original" Mike Smith.

Mike has devoted his career to the promotion of positive attitudes and the fostering of personal responsibility in young people. His 20 years on the road as a speaker, trainer, author, and philosopher have given him a unique perspective and a wealth of experience to enhance his message.

He is the president of DifferenceMakers, Limited, speaking and motivational products company. He has helped found numerous national organizations including the Alliance for Student Activities, a nonprofit association of student activity advisers. We are delighted to have Mike Smith as our keynote speaker for the VSCA State Convention!

# 2011 CALL FOR PRESENTATIONS

Virginia Student Councils Association  
85<sup>th</sup> Annual State Convention

“VSCA: Dedicated to a New Decade”  
Williamsburg Marriott, 50 Kingsmill Road, Williamsburg, Virginia  
April 1 – 3, 2011

The Virginia Student Councils Association invites you to submit ideas for a Concurrent Session to be considered for inclusion in the Annual State Convention. Presentations are selected by a program review committee of your peers and are evaluated on the timeliness of the topic, overall interest, a well-defined description, and relevance to a particular convention strand. Final selections and notifications of acceptance will be made by March 11. If you have any questions, please call the VSCA State Office at 804-355-4263.

\*\*Call for Presentations forms must be postmarked by March 4, 2011 to be considered for acceptance.

\*\*Please keep in mind that all presenters will be participating on a contributing basis, that is, they will not be financially reimbursed for registration, travel, lodging, etc.

\*\*In submitting your proposal, please be as specific as possible, especially in the title and description of your presentation. The title should be descriptive of the program content. If your proposal is accepted, the 50-75 word “program copy” description will be used in the final conference program (subject to editing), providing the basis upon which attendees select their sessions. Also, please write this description with the reader in mind.

\*\*Please check the Web site <http://www.vassp.org/vsca.html> for more information and the Call for Presentations form.

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## GOING GREEN PROJECTS

Here is a list of ways your SCA can improve your school's infrastructure, while also helping the environment by conserving natural resources and educating your peers about the importance of environmental consciousness. Most of these ideas can be easily implemented in your school immediately (perhaps with the help of your Environmental classes) to produce great eco-friendly results!

~ Brought to you by your Region IV Representative: Woodgrove High School ~

### Class/School SCA-Sponsored Projects

Make going green a class/school SCA-sponsored project by sponsoring a recycling competition, planting a class garden, or adopting the rainforest.

- **Recycle Competition:** Many classrooms already have recycling barrels next to the trash can, but you can start a competition in your school to see which class can save the most newspapers, soda cans, water bottles, or any other recyclable item.
- **Compost heap:** If your school isn't willing to start composting, you can create a mini-compost pile outside your classrooms to get rid of some of your garbage. It's probably a smart idea to make sure it's cleared with the administration and that it complies with fire codes.

- **Start a garden:** Use the compost to fertilize a class garden (a great thing to involve Environmental classes on as well).
- **Recycle technology:** Adopt the Goodwill or Dell Reconnect programs as an SCA project. These programs recycle computers and other electronics.
- **[Go Green Database](#):** Browse this database for fun eco-friendly projects that encourage awareness.
- **Adopt a rainforest:** Your class/school can adopt the rainforest, whales, a block on your street, or any other place where you want to make a difference as an SCA project.
- **Calculate your carbon footprint:** You can calculate your classroom's/school's carbon footprint, or the combined effect all of your students have on the environment. Then, discuss ways to minimize your effect on the environment.

### School Supplies

It's time to reevaluate your school supply closet and figure out how to introduce safer, more environmentally friendly pens, paints, and tissues into the mix. This is a great project for your SCA to help improve the infrastructure of your school.

- **Use water-based paints:** The Green Guide recommends using water-based paints for a non-toxic creative project (a note to pass along to art teachers).
- **Use green tissues:** Seventh Generation brand tissues are chlorine-free, so they aren't a threat to the ozone layer and have no dyes or artificial fragrances.
- **Make your own cleaning kit:** Keep your peers from breathing in harmful chemicals and help the environment by [whipping up](#) your own batch of non-toxic, environmentally friendly cleaning supplies for your school to use.
- **Stock your room with green school supplies:** If you or your school's budget can afford it, stock your room/school with green school supplies, like recycled notebook binders and biodegradable corn starch pens (a good SCA fundraiser).
- **Recharge batteries:** Rechargeable batteries can save the earth from [harmful metals and compounds](#) that can't be broken down when you toss out old batteries.

### Preserving Resources

Preserve our natural resources by following these tips to save water, electricity, and paper.

- **Make sure water faucets are turned off:** The [Water Wiser Drip Calculator](#) reveals that five drips per second is the same as letting water run in a steady stream. Make sure students turn the water off all the way (especially in science or cooking classes where water is used frequently).
- **Open windows:** If the temperature is nice outside, regulate inside temperature by opening the windows.
- **Water your garden with your leftovers:** If you have leftover water from a cooking or science assignment, use it to water plants outside instead of pouring it down the drain.
- **Check for leaks:** Check windows for insulation leaks and faucets for water leaks, which can waste electricity and water. Notify your school's maintenance department to have any leaks fixed as soon as possible.
- **Use biodegradable cups and utensils:** For class parties and snack time, keep a stash of [biodegradable](#) plates and utensils.
- **Use the right light bulbs:** [This guide](#) identifies the right "green" light bulbs, including compact fluorescent light bulbs and Energy Star bulbs, to use throughout your school.
- **Open the blinds:** Let in natural light and turn off desk lamps when packing up for the day or in the room by yourself during lunchtime.

### For Teachers

Going green at school isn't just about student involvement. Teachers can learn how to make eco-conscious choices in the teacher's lounge and when designing lesson plans, too.

- **Unplug your mini-fridge:** Consider sharing a mini-fridge with the teachers down the hall instead of having your own private refrigerator that soaks up extra electricity
- **Drink Fair Trade Coffee:** Introduce [Fair Trade Coffee](#) to the teachers' lounge for an eco-conscious, humanitarian pick-me-up (plus, a great way to let the teachers know you care!).
- **Bring a mug or glass to school:** Instead of pouring coffee or water into a Styrofoam cup, bring your own mug or glass to school, which can be washed and reused over and over again.
- **Use recycled paper:** All teachers go through a ton of notebooks and papers each year, so using [recycled paper](#) and then recycling all your files at the end of the school year the year will positively impact the environment.
- **E-mail other teachers and administration:** If your school hasn't done so already already, try to start an e-mail only campaign that eliminates hard copies of substitute requests, field trip proposals, and meeting RSVPs.
- **Insulate doors:** At the end of the day, slide draft guards under your door to insulate the room and keep energy consumption down.

### More Green Ideas

From organic snacks to carpooling to applying for environmental program grants, this list is full of even more green ideas.

- **Plant a tree:** A popular tradition for many schools on Earth Day, but your SCA can plant a tree or bush other day.
- **Turn off your computer:** Don't just put your school computers on sleep mode. Turning them off during lunch breaks and especially at night [saves](#) a lot of energy.
- **Put on a show:** Your SCA can educate the rest of your school by putting on a play or presentation that discusses an environmental topic such as global warming, preserving ecosystems, or recycling. An extra challenge would be to use only organic, natural, or non-toxic supplies to organize the event.
- **Apply for a grant:** The [Live Green Teacher Grants](#) award teachers \$1,000 to put their original green ideas and campaigns to work in the classroom.

### Networks and Groups

Encourage your students to join these networks independently or as a class to enter contests and connect with other conscious students around the world.

- **Student Environmental Action Coalition:** [This group](#) provides information on local events and global campaigns that are devoted to saving the environment.
- **Earth Force:** This [organization](#) "engages young people as active citizens who improve the environment." The Tools for Teachers section provides resources for getting involved in the classroom.
- **Save a Snowman:** Introduce your students to global warming by [sponsoring a snowman](#) and learning about saving the rainforest.

Information/Links from:

- \* [epa.gov](http://epa.gov) (U.S. Environmental Protection Agency)
- \* [teachingtips.com](http://teachingtips.com)

### HELPFUL LINKS TO OTHER ONLINE RESOURCES:

- \* VA waste management site - <http://www.deq.state.va.us/waste/>
- \* VA recycling management site - <http://www.deq.state.va.us/recycle/VA>
- \* VA water management site - <http://www.deq.state.va.us/waterresources>
- \* VA Dept. of Environmental Quality - <http://www.deq.state.va.us/>

# Dollar Signs \$\$

Dollar Signs \$\$ is a section of the newsletter dedicated to fundraising activities. For this section to be successful, students and advisers need to share their ideas with the VSCA Director at [mnelson@scaleader.org](mailto:mnelson@scaleader.org).

1. **Cake Sports Contest:** In this competition, one cheerleader and one football or basketball player are paired to enter a cake decorating contest. The teams bake and decorate a cake, which is displayed in the cafeteria. Students vote by placing money in a container for each cake. The money that is collected is donated to a charity selected by the SCA. The winning pair is given a small prize and they are recognized in the school announcements.
  2. **Charity Links:** This is similar to an activity that many SCAs conduct during Spirit Weeks. Each class (Juniors, Seniors, Sophomores, and Freshman) encourage members of their class to buy a Spirit Link for a quarter. Links are sold during lunch by the SCA for a week. After the links are purchased each day, members of the SCA connect them and display them in the lunch room or cafeteria. In this way, the students can see their chain getting longer and longer with each day's donation. This money is then donated to a charity or can be kept by the winning class.
  3. **Tree of Remembrance:** This task is often conducted during the Christmas season, but could really be done at any time. The SCA gets a large tree donated to them, usually about fourteen feet tall. Clubs, students, teachers, and local organizations buy an ornament or light in memory of a loved one. The lights and ornaments are displayed on the tree. The school that originally did this project had a tree lighting ceremony that included sentimental readings and choral music. A reception followed the lighting ceremony. A large amount of community support made this project successful.
  4. **Mile-O-Change:** This project requires a lot of monitoring and security by the SCA, but it can develop a lot of donations. The SCA contacts a local mall and gets permission to publicize the event by putting up posters throughout the mall. The students place a mile of double-sided tape running through the shopping mall. People walking through the mall are encouraged to contribute loose change to cover the mile by sticking coins to the tape. The SCA makes it clear that part of the funds will go to a local charity. After the project, the SCA has to collect the coins and count them.
  5. **Movie Festival:** This is a school-wide event. The movie festival is an event in which all students of the school congregate in the school cafeteria or other location to watch films of a certain genre. This can also serve as a fundraiser, charging to see the movie and for concessions. To make this event a success, show double or triple features. The SCA that conducted this project found that using a large screen like they have in their auditorium makes this quite successful. Advertisement is very important, and usually word of mouth is very effective, as well as putting up posters and having students dress as movie villains the week leading up to the event.
  6. **Ice Cream Social:** The Student Council which developed this project received permission to do one ice cream social each semester. Ice cream socials are great ways for students to congregate and meet new people while allowing the school to raise funds. Schools with significant military populations and large numbers of transfer students should consider this type of activity. The key to this event is to sell tickets in advance so that the appropriate amount of ice cream, toppings, and utensils can be bought. Be sure to check out how much your supplies cost so that your profit is maximized.
  7. **Alumni Tea:** Prior to Homecoming Pep Rally, the SCA held a tea party for returning alumni to get together and reminisce about the past. News of the event is sent out to alumni groups that have connections with the school. Tickets are sold in advance. Teachers are invited to attend to visit with their former students. This event does not generate a lot of profit, but it can be really fun to do.
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# Reaching Out

Reaching out is a section of the newsletter that features service projects. In order for this section to be successful, students and advisers need to share their ideas with the VSCA Director at [mnelson@scaleader.org](mailto:mnelson@scaleader.org).

1. **Use It or Lose It:** In this school, to qualify to run for re-election, all student council members had to do a community service project. The projects are left to the students' discretion. To document them, students are required to have pictures taken and have the recipient of the service write a letter about the service project. Some students choose to work as a group, others do their project individually.
2. **Senior Citizen Prom:** The SCA at one high school hosts an annual "Senior Senior prom." Community senior citizens are matched with high school students for an evening of dancing, bingo and conversation. The "Prom" is held in the cafeteria. Corsages and boutonnieres are available for all participants. The SCA prepares food for the event. The excitement and joy that the "Senior Senior Prom" provides for these vital members of the community is immeasurable.
3. **Making Elections REAL:** To vote in one school's SCA elections, students must fill out a voter registration form. They are issued a card, which they must have in their possession to vote. They used voting machines and do everything possible to make the election process similar to what happens when the students will vote in city, state, or national elections. The process is a learning tool for students to understand the importance of elections and voting.
4. **School Mascot Anti-Drug Program:** This is a drug abuse prevention program led and taught by high school students and directed toward elementary students. The high school's costumed mascot and four students go into the classrooms and teach a drug prevention lesson to elementary students. They use a coloring book written and illustrated by high school students as their text. Each student receives a pencil, the coloring book, and a certificate of completion. This project is funded by the community and benefits both the high school and the elementary students.
5. **The Potato Project:** In the spring, students plant potatoes in the flower beds around the school. The plants are pleasant to look at during the summer. In the fall, the students harvest the potatoes and donate them to a local food bank. A project for an SCA that doesn't mind if it gets its' hands dirty.
6. **Elderly Dinner Theater:** More than 100 elderly residents from five local nursing homes are bused to the school for a catered meal. The SCA members act as waiters and waitresses. After welcome speeches by a representative of the school board office and the principal, the elderly are escorted into the theater to attend their "own private viewing" of the spring musical. This is a great opportunity for our senior citizens to see the great things that the young people are doing in the school.
7. **Clean up Day:** Clean Up Day is a day set aside to focus on cleaning the campus. Each club in the school has one Saturday during the school year to conduct the clean up. The SCA and the school administration decide which club has done the best in cleaning up the school. One winning club is selected every two months. The winning club receives recognition and a pizza party.
8. **Community Artfest:** The Artfest is an event at which artistic works are showcased from the high school, as well as from the local middle and elementary schools. All students, parents, and community members are welcome to view these noteworthy works of art. It allows for the community to connect and come together to appreciate the achievements and talents of community artists.

# Spirit Links

Spirit Links is a section of the newsletter dedicated to Spirit Activities. For this section to be successful, students and advisers need to share their ideas with the VSCA Director at [mnelson@scaleader.org](mailto:mnelson@scaleader.org).

1. **Student Activity Pass:** The problem of successful student functions has been solved by selling an activity pass at the beginning of the school year. This pass allows students to gain admittance to dances, plays, and some sporting events. The pass sells for about 30 percent less than the cost for each event at the door. It also allows for guests to attend at a reduced rate. A giveaway drawing for a prize motivates students to buy early. This activity has helped improve attendance at school functions.
2. **International Holiday Door Decorating Contest:** In this school, the students have block scheduling, but the fifth period class meets every day. Each fifth period class chooses a country and decorates its door according to that country's traditions. Doors are judged by a team of teachers from the nearby elementary school. The winning class receives recognition and a pizza party.
3. **Spirit Week Banners:** During the first weeks of school, this middle school designated one as Spirit Week. One project each homeroom must complete is a banner. The SCA gives them a 3' x 3' piece of green felt and enough white felt for a border (that is their school colors), plus other colorful pieces. Banners are presented during Spirit Week and hung in the gym. Each year the activity improves. This is a great activity for a middle school.
4. **Green and Gold Competition:** The school colors are important for this activity. The colors for the school that did this activity are green and gold. Every student and staff member is placed on either the green or gold team until they permanently leave the school. Competition is both academic and athletic. Points are cumulative. At a year-end assembly, plaques are awarded to the team captains. Everyone can contribute his or her own particular talent or skill. Points are displayed in a showcase where students are recognized for their contributions.

## Advice for Student Leaders

While doing some research for this newsletter, I discovered some great information on the [Oklahoma Student Councils](#) Web site for advisers that I shared in the last two newsletters. I then discovered some great advice for student leaders, too:

### **1. DELEGATING RESPONSIBILITY:**

#### **Why is it difficult?**

Many student leaders find it difficult to delegate. There are a number of reasons for this including: preferring to do the job themselves and see that it is done right, not wanting to impose large responsibilities on other members of the group, or having some of the spotlight is moved away from the leader. While doing it all yourself may get the job done, it can create apathy among non-involved members of the group.

Sometimes leaders make the mistake of delegating only the menial work, while keeping the appealing tasks for themselves. This can give members a feeling of being used, rather than being important. The following are some simple guidelines to determine delegating responsibilities.

### **When to Delegate?**

- When there is a lot of work to be done in a limited amount of time.
- When you feel someone else has particular qualifications that would suit the task.
- When someone expresses interest in the task.
- When you think that a particular person might benefit from the responsibility.

### **Don't Delegate**

- Things that are usually your specified responsibilities, except in emergencies.
- Something that you yourself would not be willing to do.
- A task to someone who may not possess the capabilities necessary to complete the job. Never guarantee failure for members of your group.
- The leftovers.

### **Methods for Delegating**

- Ask for volunteers. Explain the task and see who is interested.
- Match talents. Don't take over tasks yourself when your request for volunteers is met with silence. Select people with talents for the task and express confidence in their abilities.
- Spread the good tasks around. Avoid favoritism amongst members of your group.

## **2. 7 IDEAS FOR EFFECTIVE MEETINGS:**

- Effective meetings are the key to the success of any organization. Possibly the most important factor in considering the effectiveness of the meeting is planning. Your meeting should be well publicized, including announcements and advertisements. Your members should know well in advance of the time, date, and location of the meeting.
- The location of your meeting should be comfortable, with plenty of chairs. Temperature, lighting, and noise should all be taken into consideration.
- The agenda should have been discussed and decided upon by the executive board or other governing body of equal stature. Agendas and minutes should be printed and ready to hand out to all attending members.
- Guest speakers or outside instructors should be informed well in advance with written invitations.
- Make sure that all of the equipment you need is ready and operating properly before your meeting begins.
- Add a little variety to your locations and make sure any instructional props or visual aids are set up and ready to go. You may even want to try a seating arrangement.
- Start your meeting on time. Punctuality is the sign of an organized group. Follow the agenda that was prepared before the meeting. As a leader, you should be able to discern the best type of procedure to be used by your group.

# Challenge to Adopt a School: A Project for every VSCA school to consider

**I put this in the last newsletter, but I am including it again because it is SO important:**

Many of you reading this letter already recognize the benefits of membership in the Virginia Student Councils Association. Perhaps, you are like me, and as an SCA advisor you have seen your student leaders improve as leaders through their involvement in VSCA activities. Maybe you are a student leader who has made great memories at the annual VSCA Convention. Since you have benefitted from VSCA, I would encourage you to “adopt a school” to join and become active in VSCA. Pick a neighboring school or a feeder school. Encourage them to join VSCA and tell them how it has benefitted your school and your SCA. Your positive outreach and encouragement could get them involved in VSCA and could quite possibly revolutionize the student leaders at their school.

## **Quotes to Inspire**

I hope that some of these quotes will give you some “reflective moments” and provide some encouragement:

*“A genuine leader is not a searcher for consensus, but a molder of consensus.”* Martin Luther King, Jr.

*“In the end, we will remember not the words of our enemies but the silence of our friends.”* Martin Luther King, Jr.

*“If you can’t feed a hundred people, then feed just one.”* Mother Theresa

*“Be the change that you want to see in the world.”* Mohandas Gandhi

*“Plan your work for today and every day, then work your plan.”* Margaret Thatcher

*“There are no great limits to growth because there are no limits of human intelligence, imagination, and wonder.”* Ronald Reagan

*“A leader is one who knows the way, goes the way, and shows the way.”* John C. Maxwell

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## **And finally...**

Please continue to send in your great ideas so we can share all the wonderful activities of great student leaders with student councils throughout the state. Please submit ideas to Mike Nelson, VSCA Director at [mnelson@scaleader.org](mailto:mnelson@scaleader.org), and I will try to get as many ideas as possible in our monthly newsletters.

**Contact Information:**

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*VSCA is sponsored by the Virginia Association of Secondary School Principals.*