



# The Student Leader

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

May 2011

## Always on the Lookout for New Ideas

The biggest challenge many student leaders and advisers confront is searching for service projects and fundraisers that will be successful. *The Student Leader* is a great place to obtain and share ideas that can be used by any student council to meet specific objectives and also possibly help energize the school community. Student leaders and advisers are encouraged to share their ideas in this format. This edition of *The Student Leader* features wonderful ideas from the hard-working student councils of Pine Spring Elementary School, Flint Hill Elementary School, Montross Middle School, Great Bridge Middle School, Warwick High School, and Loudoun Valley High School. The ideas that these schools have shared appear in our School Spotlight section of the newsletter.

This newsletter also features spirit activities, fundraisers, and service projects gleaned from the web that may assist student council leaders and advisers. This newsletter, much like Convention, is a tool to improve any student council in Virginia.

*Mike Nelson, VSCA Director*

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## **The 2011 - 2012 VSCA Advisory Committee**

*The VSCA Advisory Committee is instrumental in planning and developing leadership activities throughout the state. The following schools have been selected to take leadership positions on the 2011- 2012 Advisory Committee.*

- President School: Woodgrove High School  
Loudoun Division  
Kelsey Briel, Student Representative  
Emily Stevens, Adviser
- Vice President School: Loudoun Valley High School  
Loudoun Division  
Katie Stevenson, Student Representative  
Eileen Lowry, Kenyamo McFarlane, Advisers
- Secretary School: Stafford High School  
Stafford Division  
Will Janney, Student Representative  
Margaret Bridges, Adviser
- Middle School Rep: Tuckahoe Middle School  
Henrico Division  
Rebecca Webb, Student Representative  
Christina Hopkins, Adviser
- Region 3 Rep: Stafford High School  
Stafford Division  
Byung Hyuk Kim, Student Representative  
Margaret Bridges, Adviser
- Region 4 Rep: Stone Bridge High School  
Loudoun Division  
Ashley Baird, Student Representative  
Eileen Lowry, Kenyamo McFarlane, Advisers
- Region 5 Rep: Liberty High School  
Bedford Division  
Peyton Bond, Student Representative  
M. Robin Waldron, Adviser
- Region 8 Rep: Buckingham County High School  
Buckingham Division  
Danielle Walker, Student Representative  
Mary Stearrett, Adviser

## **UPDATE: VSCA Advisory Committee Appointed Member Opportunities**

Student leaders and their schools are encouraged to apply to be appointed members on the advisory committee. Additionally, we still have a number of open regional representative positions for high, middle, and elementary schools. Schools are encouraged to apply as soon as possible to become part of the VSCA Advisory Committee.

The following regional representative positions still remain open:

### **High School Representatives:**

Region 1  
Region 2  
Region 6  
Region 7

### **Elementary School Representatives:**

Regions 1/2/8  
Regions 3/4  
Regions 5/6/7

### **Middle School Representatives:**

Regions 3/4  
Regions 5/6/7

On the next two pages of the newsletter is the appointed member application for the VSCA Advisory Committee. Any school that is interested in serving on the VSCA Advisory Committee for 2011 – 2012 should fill out the form and submit to the VSCA State Office.

Please contact Mike Nelson at [mnelson@scaleader.org](mailto:mnelson@scaleader.org) to get more information about becoming an appointed member school of the VSCA Advisory Committee.

## VSCA APPOINTED COMMITTEE MEMBER APPLICATION for 2011 – 2012

**This form must be typed or block printed. All sections of the application must be completed. Incomplete or unreadable applications will be returned.**

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Home Address \_\_\_\_\_

City, State, Zip Code \_\_\_\_\_

Home Phone Number (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Birth \_\_\_\_\_ Sex (circle one)      M    F

Current School \_\_\_\_\_

School Division \_\_\_\_\_ Region \_\_\_\_\_

School Address \_\_\_\_\_

City, State, Zip Code \_\_\_\_\_

School Telephone Number (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_

Student Council Adviser's Name \_\_\_\_\_

School You Will Attend in the Fall \_\_\_\_\_

Rising Grade Level (circle one)    5      6      7      8      9      10    11    12

**Postmark Deadline if June 1, 2011.**  
**Mail completed application to:**  
VSCA State Office  
VASSP/DSL  
4909 Cutshaw Avenue  
Richmond, Virginia 23230  
Call (804) 370-0822 if you need clarification.

SCA/VSCA Experience

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Other Leadership/Extracurricular Activities

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Please write a brief summary (at least one paragraph, not more than 250 words) explaining why you would like to be an appointed committee member on the VSCA Advisory Committee. You may attach an additional sheet if necessary.

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If accepted as an appointed committee member, I understand the responsibilities of this position and will be willing to fulfill them to the best of my ability. I understand that I will be responsible for all expenses involved for attending meetings (motels, meals, transportation, etc.).

Applicants Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Adviser's Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Principal's Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

# School Spotlight #1: Pine Spring Elementary

## **Project: Recycling Program**

Pine Spring Elementary School's SCA decided to improve their recycling efforts by demonstrating the importance of conservation and recycling and how these help preserve the quality of the environment for the present and the future with a combined community, state, national, and international impact. Although the SCA Recycling Program has been successful throughout the years, the Pine Spring SCA wanted to increase the number of recycling items collected. The Pine Spring SCA participated in a program sponsored by Fairfax Clean Air and Fairfax County Recycling and also competed with two other schools to increase the recycling efforts of the school population.

Every officer, special representative, room representative, and alternate was assigned a classroom. It was their responsibility to explain the program, remind students and teachers to recycle, and monitor the contents of the recycling baskets. Most classrooms were provided two recycling baskets – one for paper and one for plastic bottles. At the end of each week, SCA representatives were to empty the recycling baskets into large receptacles located in the cafeteria. This year, each member had a chart and tallied the number of recycling baskets and the number of plastic and canned items they collected each week. At the end of each marking period the charts were collected and the class summaries were reported to Fairfax Clean Air.

In addition to classrooms, recycling baskets were given to the office, clinic, rooms of all specialists, and staff lounges. All students and staff worked hard to make sure that everyone recycled and that they improved their environment for the future.

# School Spotlight #2: Flint Hill Elementary

## **Project: New Student Bulletin Board**

The members of the SCA Human Relations Committee of Flint Hill Elementary School received a list of the new students in the school. The committee members made an appointment with each of the classroom teachers to take a picture of the new students. During recess time, the SCA students went to the classes, introduced themselves to the students, took their pictures and then wrote down their names for identification purposes. A bulletin board was then created, entitled "New Leaves on our Flint Hill Tree," with the pictures of the new students hanging as leaves on a large tree. Flint Hill students were encouraged to check out the pictures in order to familiarize themselves with the new students.

## School Spotlight #3: Montross Middle

### **Project: Hats On Day**

The SCA of Montross Middle School sponsored Hats On Day. On this day, students paid to wear a hat. The money that was collected from Hats On Day was donated to the Foundation for Children with Cancer, an organization provides financial assistance for the families of children with pediatric cancer. This financial assistance provides direct and tangible support that helps families to pay their mortgages, make insurance payments, and cover utility bills, allowing families to focus on their child's treatment and recovery. Students received a sticker when they paid to wear a hat. On a Monday they purchased the sticker and they were allowed to wear the hat on Friday, provided that they were also wearing the sticker. The event was quite successful and Montross Middle School raised \$500 for the Foundation for Children with Cancer.

## School Spotlight #4: Great Bridge Middle

### **Project: Toys for Kids and Coats for ForKids**

In December, the SCA of Great Bridge Middle School combined two donation drives. The SCA collected Coats for Kids and delivered them to a local company, Albano Cleaners. Additionally, the SCA collected new toys for ForKids, a local charity that provides housing and tutoring to homeless children. The school collected a large number of toys and coats. The SCA officers folded coats and gathered toys before school. The members of the SCA and the advisor were overwhelmed with emotion by the charity and good will demonstrated by the faculty and students of Great Bridge Middle School. The SCA was able to deliver over 150 coats and more than eight boxes of toys. The fact that so many children were going to have a happy Christmas due to the efforts of the SCA made this a worthwhile endeavor.

## School Spotlight #5: Warwick High School

### **Project: Read Across America**

National Read Across America week was March 1 – 4. The SCA members of Warwick High School partnered with several clubs from the high school and purchased Dr. Seuss and other career-focused books for preschool-aged children. The SCA members used time during lunch and stayed after school each day of National Read Across America week to read to the children in the Newport News' Gatewood Program for Educating Exceptional Preschoolers (PEEP) program. The PEEP program is a comprehensive program for young children ages 2 – 5 who qualify for special education services. This program is housed on several elementary school

campuses and offers half and full day classes for students with a variety of disabilities. Warwick SCA members also traveled to Riverside Children’s Hospital and read to some of the patients. Some of the high school students got so involved in what they were doing that they dressed according to the career they read about. After reading to the children, the books were donated to the school or the hospital. The SCA members of Warwick were able to make a difference in the lives of these young children.

## School Spotlight #6: Loudoun Valley High

### **Project: VikingFest**

The Loudoun Valley High School SCA organized VikingFest, a free back to school carnival for all students on the Friday before school began. Students picked up their course schedules in a carnival-like atmosphere organized by the SCA and other school organizations. Free food and drinks were available from vendors, as well as booths for fun activities such as corn hole, face painting, and eating contests. All incoming and returning students were invited to attend, as well as their family members and teachers. VikingFest, which began in 2004, continues to be a well-regarded tradition at Loudoun Valley High School.

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## ***Reaching Out***

*Reaching out is a section of the newsletter which features service projects. Here is a sampling of projects from the web. 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. Kids Vote**

Kids Vote is an annual event hosted in conjunction with state elections. Student council members visit both elementary and middle school classrooms to present mini-lessons on the democratic process after training with their advisers. As part of these mini-lessons, the student council members unofficially poll the students of the elementary and middle schools with regards to “issues” in which they would like to be more involved. Once the mini-lessons and polling are complete, the data is compiled and presented to the administration to craft one elementary and one middle school question in which students will be given the opportunity to vote. The actual voting takes place in coordination with state-scheduled elections. On the evening of the election, the votes for both questions are “officially” tallied and verified by the student council advisers and administration so that the results can be announced the following morning at school. In addition to providing all students with an opportunity to take part in the democratic process, Kids Vote also allows the student council to interact with the student council members from other school levels.

## **2. Bridges: Elementary to Middle School Transition Program**

This is another great activity for a middle school student council. Bridges is a program that brings together all of the 5<sup>th</sup> graders who will be attending the middle school the following September. The intent is to welcome the 5<sup>th</sup> graders to the middle school, give them a chance to get to know other students who will be in the same 6<sup>th</sup> grade class, calm fears they and their parents may have about leaving a small elementary school for a large middle school, and to give information that will be helpful in the transition to middle school. The Bridges program also gives the current student leaders a chance to apply their leadership skills and identify the incoming student leaders that may follow in their footsteps. Planning involves the student council and the elementary school guidance counselors. The SCA adviser meets with all elementary principals at their annual calendar meeting to set out the date for Bridges. The elementary guidance counselors work with the 5<sup>th</sup> graders throughout the year, and meet several times with the SCA adviser and the counselors at the middle school to prepare for Bridges.

On the day of the event, the SCA of the middle school takes an active role, leading groups of fifth graders through the activities, which include:

1. Icebreakers and group problem solving activities upon arrival at the middle school.
2. Stations on the athletic field. Groups stay at each station for about 8 minutes. These activity stations cover numerous topics, such as how to open a school combination lock to cooperative games that help students to get to know each other as they play. The elementary physical education teachers assist in running these games.
3. Cookout: Usually sponsored by a local food service company.
4. Dress Code and Spirit Day Fashion Show.
5. Middle School Question and Answer session where SCA leaders answer questions about life at the school.

Overall, this program is highly effective, with results seen each September when the incoming 6<sup>th</sup> graders arrive and are able to quickly and comfortably assimilate into the student body.

## **3. Serve the Soldiers**

The VSCA newsletter has provided a number of service projects relating to providing assistance to deployed soldiers. This activity has been included, not to be repetitious, but because it shows how even middle schools can participate.

In the fall of one school year, a middle school received an email from a deployed soldier who had been a former counselor at the school. The soldier related that the members of his unit were starting to feel beaten down by the heat, and depressed by the approach of the holidays. The soldiers were in need of some reminders from home. The SCA's service committee decided to start a collection of letters, cards, and personal items for this unit. Rather than sending items in time for Christmas, the committee decided to send the items in January. The idea was not only to give more time to collect items, but to have them arrive after the holidays when the added attention of the season has long since faded. The SCA

collected 13 large postal boxes of letters, cards, and personal items in just two weeks. The items were shipped in early January, and were delivered to the unit at the end of that month. The items collected went to over 25 servicemen and women who showed their appreciation through e-mails, letters, and photos. Also, the soldier who first sent the original email was arranging for a flag flown over his base in Afghanistan to be sent to the middle school as a token of appreciation.

This project began as a discussion in the SCA's service committee, and led to an effort that would involve the entire student body. Major decisions made by the students included the following:

1. What items should be collected? After reading the emails from the soldier, the items most wanted by troops were letters and cards showing appreciation, books, puzzles, games, balls, socks, gloves, and snacks. Therefore, these were the items asked for on flyers and posters.
2. When should the items be collected and shipped? Once the committee decided to ship the items in January to "combat" the post-holiday blues, it allowed for collection throughout the month of December. The cost to ship these items would be paid by the student council.
3. How would it be publicized? The service committee worked hand-in-hand with the SCA publicity committee to make posters that would be hung all over the school, and create flyers to be posted in strategic locations, as well as on the SCA website. The SCA and advisers contacted all reading/writing teachers in the school, encouraging them to incorporate this activity into their classroom instruction. Nearly the entire department did incorporate the project, and as a result, hundreds of letters were written and included in the shipment.
4. How would collections take place? It was decided that the student council room would be the main collection area. Items were separated by grade level. The SCA conducts a Spirit Point competition each year, and the committee decided to award Spirit Points to the grade that donated the most items over the designated two-week period.
5. How would the items be organized for shipment? After the collection period ended, members of the service committee met and decided to have each postal shipment box contain a variety of items.

This event was extremely successful. The student body and faculty embraced this project and a renewed sense of patriotism could be seen in many of them.

#### **4. Earth Day Outdoor Classroom**

Every year on Earth Day, the student council members of this high school do an outdoor project. In the last few years, the project has been the Outdoor Classroom. In this project, the SCA members come to school with rakes, plastic bags, and dressed in appropriate outdoor attire and clean an outdoor area of the school.

This project was first brought up at this school's January SCA meeting when someone noted that there was an outdoor area with benches that had been unoccupied due to the accumulation of trash and debris. The SCA then decided that they would renovate this area for Earth Day and make use of it for various purposes.

Steps this SCA had to take to accomplish this task included the following:

1. The SCA had to ask the administration if they could work outside of the school building.
2. The SCA had to locate the supplies needed.
3. On the day of the event, the SCA had all of the members involved come straight to the auditorium in the morning for attendance. Then the SCA members went outside and began to rake, pick up trash, and remove branches.

This SCA activity was a great accomplishment for the beautification of the school.

## **5. One Thousand Paper Cranes**

After having Rachel's Challenge, a national anti-bullying campaign, come to one school, the student council was inspired to make one thousand paper cranes. There is an old Chinese proverb that states if someone makes one thousand paper cranes and presents them, those to whom the cranes are presented will be granted luck, health, and well-being. At the SCA's Fall WMASC leadership workshop, this SCA presented a hospital with their own set of one thousand cranes to hang in their building to give their patients hope. Throughout the year this SCA will be making cranes for local hospices, a girl in the school who has cancer, other local hospitals, and families that are stuck with either illness or economic mishaps.

# ***Spirit Links***

*Spirit Links is a section of the newsletter which features school spirit projects. Here is a sampling of projects from the Web. 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. Clash of the Classes:**

Clash of the Classes is a great event for a middle school. The school that conducted this event has the 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup>, and 8<sup>th</sup> grades and staff "battle" against each other for the winner's plaque. Activities are relay races that include cup stacking, balloon sweep, scooter races, and basketball toss. The winning grade level gets their grade and year placed on the plaque, which is kept in the Student Council trophy case. This activity is planned by a committee of student council representatives and other interested students along with a physical education teacher. The students meet during and after school to plan and set up the activity. The activity is student run. The committee members have students sign up to participate in the events prior to the activity. During Clash of the Classes, the committee members set up the events, run the music, and keep score. This project fosters a feeling of unity among students

in each grade level, and students who would not normally be involved in after school events participate because it is held during school hours.

## **2. Mr. Middle School:**

Mr. Middle School is another great project that was done by a middle school. This is a really fun student council event. The school which conducted the activity stated that they had many 8<sup>th</sup> grade guys that wanted to participate in this event, which is basically a male beauty pageant. A series of steps had to be followed to achieve a successful event. First, the SCA made a list of all of the 8<sup>th</sup> grade guys who were interested in participating. The pageant consisted of categories including casual wear, sports-wear, a talent competition, and a question and answer session. Once everyone had their pictures taken and their talents filmed, the SCA edited everything, and posted it on the school's electronic and video announcements. Once the contestants are placed on the announcements, the SCA conducts a vote for 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup>, and 8<sup>th</sup> graders. The contestant with the most votes wins.

## **3. Big Game Week:**

Some of the greatest sources of school spirit are undoubtedly the school's sports teams. During each season (Fall, Winter, and Spring) find a week where every team has a game, preferably home. Plan this week as a Spirit Week to show support of the school's athletes. Decorate their buses, the bleachers, and the hallways. Encourage council members to attend the games. Host a pep rally. Give athletes small good-luck gifts or letters during the week. Highlight seniors and captains. Find ways to celebrate these students and their hard work during the season.

# *Dollar Signs*

*Dollar Signs is a section of the newsletter which features fundraising projects. Here is a sampling of projects from the Web. 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. Game Night**

This is a great activity for a middle school. In this project the SCA hosts a sports competition, bingo, various games and a dance on the first Friday of January in order to raise funds and build school spirit. Prizes are given to the winners of the various games. Game night lasts approximately two hours.

Planning for this activity occurred two months in advance in order to secure a DJ. The school board and the superintendent are provided with the date of the activity. The members of the student council bring in baked goods, video game systems, and board games. The student council runs all of the games, admissions, and sells all of the snacks.

One benefit of this project is that it promoted school spirit. It also provided the student council members with various leadership responsibilities in order to build stronger leadership within the school. The Game Night raised money for the student council as well as providing proceeds for a charity.

## **2. Jammin' for Charity**

This fundraising event is focused on a talent show that the SCA holds in the auditorium. The talent show allowed students to show off their abilities to the entire school. Since the talent show and the rock concert that the student council used to hold did not fare well, the SCA combined these events into one big event that is very popular with students.

Many steps have to be methodically followed to make this event a success: Sign-ups for the event begin a few weeks in advance. Student council members go to homerooms and ask for students with talent to sign up for the Jammin' for Charity event. All types of talents are welcome. In addition, the SCA always contacts the most popular band at the school and privately asks them to play.

The day before the event, there is a dress rehearsal. The advisers need to approve all of the talents to make sure that they are school-appropriate, and to make sure that all of the students are actually ready to perform on stage. On the night of the event, all of the talents are performed first, followed by the band at the end. The band usually plays six songs, which makes the event last about two hours. Tickets are sold at the door. The student council conducting this event charged \$5. The SCA makes sure to have a qualified MC for the event.

The turnout for this event has been strong and this SCA really raised a lot of money in this project.

## **3. Crafty Calendar**

The student council officers of one school decided that they would incorporate more interaction between the middle school students and the elementary students of the district. The Crafty Calendar created the opportunity for school interaction. In this activity, elementary students take part in themed activities after school by signing up for each activity and paying a small fee to cover materials and supplies. All additional funds generated by the event are donated to a charity. The Crafty Calendar has included events such as pumpkin painting, candy grams, giving chocolate roses, peeps for your peeps, and a junior carnival. Student council members, faculty, and parents have all shared how much these monthly events have been enjoyed and fostered a true spirit of community among all students.

The planning of these events began in the summer, prior to the start of the school year. The officers and advisers worked together to combine the traditional student council fundraisers with themed events for younger students. Once the SCA had a complete calendar, it was presented to the administration for approval and shared with the faculty. Notification of the monthly events was shared with parents through electronic means and

student council members signed up to assist during the monthly SCA meetings. Supplies were purchased in advance based on an estimated number of elementary participants. Student council officers meet with the advisers during their lunch periods a week ahead of the event to make models of the crafts, learn games, and other “filler” activities for students finishing early the day of the event, and make final preparations including attendance and sign-out sheets.

During the afternoon of the event, student council advisers and members use activity period time to set up the area where the elementary students will be meeting. As the eager participants arrive at school dismissal time, they are greeted by the SCA officers, checked in, and led to their working station for the projects. At the conclusion of the event, once all elementary students have been signed out by a parent, all officers remain to clean up. This has been an incredibly successful fundraising tool for the SCA and their charity, in addition to the flourishing spirit of collaboration between the schools.

### **Quotes to Inspire**

“Your imagination is your preview of life’s coming attractions.” - Albert Einstein

“Every second you spend thinking about someone else’s dreams you take time away from your own.”  
– Yogi Berra

“Make no small plans for they have no power to stir the soul.” – Machiavelli

“No dreamer is ever too small; no dream is ever too big.” – Anonymous

“The tragedy of life doesn’t lie in not reaching your goal. The tragedy lies in having no goals to reach.” ~ Benjamin Mays

“I’m a great believer in luck, and I find the harder I work the more I have of it.” – Thomas Jefferson

“There are no secrets to success. It is the result of preparation, hard work, learning from failure.” -  
Colin Powell

“All children are artists. The problem is how to remain an artist once he grows up.” - Pablo Picasso

“Man’s mind, once stretched by a new idea, never regains its original dimensions.” – Oliver Wendell  
Holmes

## And finally...

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

### **Contact Information:**

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4909 Cutshaw Avenue  
Richmond, VA 23230  
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VSCA State Office: 804.355.4263  
Fax: 804.355.4262

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

*This newsletter was posted on the VSCA Website at [www.scaleader.org](http://www.scaleader.org).*