

VETERANS
MEMORIAL
MIDDLE
SCHOOL

GENERALS 360

ALL AROUND INFORMATION

April 2009

Important Dates

April 6-10
Spring Break

April 20-24
GCRCT

Teacher Spotlight: Ms. West

"A good teacher is like a candle; it consumes itself to light the way for others." In her own words, this phrase sums up Ms. Angel West's attitude toward her profession. Ms. West has worked at Veterans for three years as a seventh grade Social Studies teacher, but she has been a teacher for ten years. Ms. West realized that she wanted to become a teacher in 1999, when she had a long term substituting job and the students responded to her very well. She realized that teaching was something that she enjoyed, and other teachers encouraged her as an instructor. Before teaching seventh grade, she taught eighth grade for seven years in Florida and also had a long-term job teaching sixth grade. Ms. West originally wanted to become a social worker for which she attended Florida A&M University in Tallahassee. Ms. West has earned several degrees including a Bachelor's degree in social work and a Master's degree in business at AIU. In 2006, Ms. West met Mr. Arena at a job fair where he informed her about Veterans and hired her. Ms. West has many great memories in her career, but her favorite would have to be the 2004 Day County History Bee where her team received fourth place. Ms. West enjoys working with kids and motivating her students to reach their full potential. Though teaching, she can incorporate counseling and educating, two of the things she loves most.



Ms. West has a son named Jailyne who is in the seventh grade. In her spare time, she is the team mom for his basketball team. She is also the track coach at Veterans. Staying very busy, she also volunteers with Rockdale County Juvenile Court System, and she mentors young girls. Ms. West is also a Mary Kay beauty consultant and has been for six years. She enjoys bowling and attending football and basketball games with her son. Ms. West is a very dedicated and determined teacher, and she believes all students can learn and should do so excitedly. Ms. West believes, "We are what we repeatedly do; excellence therefore is not an act but a habit."

By Mariah Patton and Brandon Key

Theme School Update

The Newton County school system recently approved the establishment of a middle school theme school for the 2009-2010 school year. Dr. Jill Adams will be principal of Clements Middle Theme School, which has been designated a parent involvement theme school. Dr. Adams is currently an assistant principal at Indian Creek Middle School. The theme school's location will be at the current site of Clements Middle School and will house students in grades 4-8. Transportation will be provided on a limited basis to and from stops throughout the county. Students who are currently zoned for Clements will be zoned for the new Liberty Middle School on Salem Road. For more information please visit www.newtoncountyschools.org.

By Justin Goodwin and Bret Dunn

★ **Veterans Memorial** ★
★ **Middle School** ★
★ 13357 Brown Bridge ★
★ Road ★
★ Covington, GA 30016 ★
★ 770-385-6893 ★



Generals Sports

Cheer Generals 2009-2010

Cheerleading tryouts are coming up from April 27-May 1, 2009. There will be an information parent meeting on April 2, 2009. Coach Scott will be returning as the cheerleading coach for the upcoming year. Coach Scott is looking for girls with a good attitude, coordination, jumps, and preferably tumbling skills. For the upcoming tryout, girls should come prepared to learn, have patience, ask for help when needed, and perform to the best of their ability. In the end, only eighteen girls will make the team, so they should come ready to show what they've got. In order to make the team, girls must have absolutely no behavior issues, and be passing all of their classes. The girls should come to tryouts with a current physical and completed information packet, which can be picked up from the front office, and must be returned by April 22, 2009. Coach Scott's main focus is to have a fun, safe season, and she plans to do everything differently because there are going to be many different personalities. She looks forward to getting to know the girls and seeing them grow throughout the season. Coach Scott is looking forward to unveiling the 2009-2010 Cheer Generals!

By Kaylin Johnson and Tiffani Kaage



Career Day PowerPoints

"What do you want to be?" This question has been ringing through the halls of Veterans over this past month, but it begs the question "What will I *do* after I graduate?" The counselors at Veterans have been using a website called GCIS.org to find out what students really prefer to do "beneath a hard shell of peer pressure forged skin and clothing" according to some students, in other words, this means that people don't know what they want because of outside pressures. It might have seemed strange that a "Hollister-wearing blonde" could be interested in becoming a game warden, but these tests students took penetrated appearances and gave students a look at what they want to really consider when playing the job field. These tests, of course, aren't going to be the defining factor in a student's decision, but they do show a student some insight as to what's out there besides the average cubicle monkey job. Some of the students entered the Career PowerPoint Competition, in which they had to create a PowerPoint that described a career that they were suited for according to the tests that students took, which had winners from all three middle school grades: sixth, seventh, and eighth. These winners are: sixth grade winner Ajanae Johnson, seventh grade winner Halie Norman, and eighth grade winner Iyona Hoover. These winners were chosen because of their outstanding effort and overall work on a PowerPoint presentation about a possible career that they can pursue in the near future. It's refreshing to know that our nation's youth is planning ahead for the future.

By Ian Elliott



HOOPS FOR HEART

The Hoops for Heart fundraiser was a tremendous success for Veterans Memorial Middle School. Students from every grade level participated, and made it worthwhile. The school raised \$2,154 for the American Heart Association. Last year Veterans raised the highest amount of money out of all the middle schools. Sixth grade raised approximately \$500, seventh grade raised \$380, and eighth grade raised \$450. Coach Kiesel says Hoops for Heart was a huge success, the school raised a lot of money, and the students had a good time. In the two days sixth grade raised the most money. Hoops for Heart was a great success for 2009. Hopefully, 2010 will be a bigger success, and Veterans will raise more money.

By Torey Hinton and Selena Vance



Art Exhibit

Four students from Veterans Memorial Middle School recently were recognized at a reception for their artwork. Their work was displayed in the fifth Annual Newton County Public School Student Art Exhibit at the Newton County Library during the month of March. Their names are Treveous Belcher, Teeda Niemann, Alyssa Ransome, and Jasmin Townes. Mrs. Christy Mortimer, their art teacher, was the sponsor for Veterans. When Generals 360 staff asked Mrs. Mortimer how she picked her students, she says, "I picked the best art projects of the current nine weeks." Veterans is proud of its fine artists!

By Andrea Broadwater and Savannah Tappin

Great Ways to Study for the CRCT

The Georgia Criterion Reference Competency Test, (CRCT) is the most important test of the year throughout all of Georgia's schools and it is coming up on April 20-24. Here are ten tips to help students successfully pass the test:

- ◆ Read ALL of the directions before answering the questions.
- ◆ Don't waste your energy being nervous; just relax and do your best.
- ◆ GO TO BED at a reasonable time each night before testing.
- ◆ Eat a good breakfast.
- ◆ Read the entire question and any possible answers before marking your answer.
- ◆ Answer EVERY question.
- ◆ Use the process of elimination.
- ◆ Concentrate, Don't get distracted.
- ◆ Pace yourself.
- ◆ Check your answers well.
- ◆ If you are done before time runs out check your answers.



If you have any questions about preparing for the CRCT, ask a teacher or one of the administrators.

By Toni Simmons and Andrea Broadwater

Soaring Eagles

On January 10, 2009, Veterans Memorial Middle School began a mentoring program called Eagles. The Eagles program was started by assistant principal James Peek and seventh grade teacher Mr. Eric Taylor. The program is going through a test run this school year and a broader version will be opened to the school during the 2009-2010 school year. In this program Eagles and Buzzards are used as illustrations of the students' character. Buzzards symbolize those who get in trouble in school and encourage others to do the same. Eagles are those who do their best in school and are willing to help others. The Eagles program consists of ten students chosen by Mr. Peek and they meet every Saturday for two hours from 9am-11am. While in the Eagles program, the students will be expected to learn four principals: scholarship, leadership, citizenship, and wellness. These principals will be taught by Mr. Taylor. Once the students have mastered all four principles, they will be awarded with an eagle and begin community services, such as visiting colleges to learn from other people and meeting with churches to share their knowledge with others.



Back row: Lydell Williams, Josh Dickerson, Kenneth Deberry, Devaris Dyer. Front row: Terrance Green, Mario Gordon, Daquan Mims

By Alaysia McKenzie



Goodbye Officer Washington, Hello Officer McCoy

Veterans has been through a few resource officers in the past year. Our last resource officer, Officer Washington, loved his job at Veterans but was promoted and went to work for a federal agency. Temporarily taking his place was his uncle, Officer Washington, until a permanent officer could be hired.

Protecting Veterans now is Officer Jacquetta McCoy, who has been in Public Safety for over thirteen years. She is from Baltimore, Maryland and has been working in the Atlanta area for over seven years. Officer McCoy has four children; one of them is a student at Veterans, and the others are

younger. In the past, Officer McCoy has had a wide variety of jobs. She worked for the Baltimore Police, United States Army, National Guard Military Police Unit, and Baltimore City Corrections. Students and faculty at Veterans are glad to have her as their new resource officer.



By Dallas Esguerra and Toni Tompkins

Attention Readers!

The Generals 360 newsletter is available in digital form only. It is linked to our school web site and is available via e-mail. If you are interested in receiving it electronically every month, we need your e-mail address. Send an e-mail to esguerra.carla@newton.k12.ga.us letting us know that you are interested. Here at VMMS, we believe that all parents/guardians should stay informed of all that is going on at our school, and we are pleased to give you this option. Thank you for your interest in your child's education!



Agenda Spotlight

Every student is given an agenda every year when they come to Veterans, so there shouldn't be any reason for students to disobey the rules, however disturbances are becoming more frequent at Veterans everyday. Students are not supposed to bring pointers, yoyos, lighters, pepper spray, or any other nuisance devices to school, except as a part of a school planned activity. Teachers and administrators have the right to take up any of the listed items. The teachers and administrators also can determine if the items can cause a disturbance or a nuisance. A student is only allowed to bring the banned items with a teacher or administrator permission for educational purposes only. The school assumes no responsibility for confiscated or stolen items, but will return such confiscated item(s) to the parents/guardians on request. School system employees will not conduct an investigation for lost or stolen items. All of the above information written above and more can be found on page seventeen of the agenda. By Summer Bratcher and Savannah Slater

Peer Helper Conference

On March 24, 2009, the peer helpers at Veterans and schools from the tri-county area took a trip to Milledgeville, Georgia for an annual conference. The students who went from Veterans were Christina Dixon, Bret Dunn, Jesi Price, Noelle Turner, Dallas Esguerra, Kimberly League, Kimberly Bennett, Savannah Slater, Derrick Felix, Cati Avelotis, and Mrs. Turner, one of the counselors at Veterans. This year the conference was held at Georgia State College and University in Milledgeville. The Peer Helpers attended seminars that would allow them to become better people and better at helping their peers. The classes covered subjects like "College Prep," "What Will You Do After High School?" "Choosing College," "Study Skills" and more. Each student received a schedule to follow through the day. Mr. Keith L. Brown, the motivational speaker, taught students five important things using a metaphor about a pencil. These were:

1. You have willing to be held (you have to be able to supported),
2. You have to be willing to be sharpened (you have to be disciplined)
3. You must only care about what's inside of a pencil
4. You must Erase your past (don't look back only forward)
5. You have to work together.

Mr. Brown's speech taught students to be ready for life and to prepare for after high school. The peer helpers who went on this trip found it to be helpful in life and in school. By Christina Dixon and Savannah Slater



Honors Band

"This year's concert band is amazing. They have come so far," says Mr. Little, Veterans' Band Director. Verterans' Band has been busy with several performances. Friends, family and faculty enjoyed a Christmas Concert on Dec. 18, 2009. The band also performed at several pep-rallies and on March 3, 2009 the band traveled to Newton County High

school to perform their second annual pre-festival concert. On March 19, the band played for the Georgia Music Educators Association District Four Festival. The band received excellent marks. On a scale of 1-5, with 5 being the worst and one the best, Veterans received all twos in sight reading, in stages of performance. Also performing at the festival were Indian Creek, Cousins, and Clements. The Georgia Music Educators Association or G.E.M.A organizes student festivals and try-outs for Honors and All-State band. T.J

Brookman, a clarinet player, was the only student from Veterans who made honors band. For Honors Band, a student picks a certain piece of music and plays it for a group of judges. T.J practiced with the rest of the honors band on Friday, February 6 and Saturday, February 7. That evening the honors band performed at six o' clock. Veterans is proud of T.J's accomplishments and this year's amazing concert band.

By Presley Sartor



Future Freshmen Announcement

On March 10, 2009, the High School Counselors from Newton and Alcovy high paid a visit to Veterans eighth grade teachers. They discussed and gave valuable information to teachers regarding the changes future ninth graders will be experiencing next year. The High School Counselors paid another visit to Veterans, but this time, met with the students to discuss the changes. The main thing discussed was block scheduling. Block scheduling is something new to Alcovy and Newton High School. Each day for one semester, a student will take four classes, two academics and two electives. In the first semester, a student would take two different academic classes, in this case they would be Social Studies and Language Arts. Many students have been wondering how this could affect the high school credits. With block scheduling, a student would end the year with 32 credits after completing every class. To graduate, a student needs 28 credits and two-units of the same foreign language. However, eighth grade students attending Newton High School next year will not be able to take a foreign language, as it is not offered to freshmen.



New to Newton for the 2009-2010 school year is a gifted program called the Liberal Arts Academy. Current eighth grade students in the Quest gifted Program with an average of at least an 85 and other eighth graders with an average of 90 or higher qualify to apply for the program. On April 27, 2009 there will be a registration packet sent home and on April 28 there will be a parent meeting at 6:30 at both high schools and the completed registration forms are due back to school on May 1.

By Alaysia McKenzie and Noelle Turner

T.S.A.

The club, T.S.A., has done many wonderful things this year. T.S.A. stands for Technology Student Association. It is a student-run organization. This club sponsored a plethora of fundraisers and events; some of the events included the Guitar Hero party, bake sales, and a leadership meeting called C.O.R.E. T.S.A. went to the C.O.R.E meeting to learn more about how to start and run the club successfully; because, it is a student-run organization, T.S.A. has student officers. Bret Dunn, (President) Kee-Kee Jordan, (Vice President) Sergio Cruz, (Secretary) Derrick Felix (Treasurer) led the Guitar Hero party to help raise money for the state competition. Although they weren't able to attend the competition, they will be participating in an informal competition held by their advisor, Mr. Hartman. The competition will be involving solar powered race cars. After the competition is over they will get to keep the race cars. Mr. Hartman stated, "T.S.A. was just to wet our feet so that next year we can pick up the ball and roll it." Participating in TSA has been very beneficial to the students that were in it.

By Kee-Kee Jordan and Derrick Felix

No Summer School In 2009

Summer school classes in Newton County will no longer be available. This means that any student who fails two or more academic classes will be forced to repeat the same grade. As an alternative, the student may complete a Georgia Virtual School session, **however it is the parents' responsibility to register their child in the virtual program or another accredited computer program outside Newton County.** The parents will have to watch the student's progress themselves on the online program. The student must have computer and internet access to successfully complete the sessions. If a student can not gain computer access, Newton County schools will have a library open and with available computers. More information will be sent home soon with any child who is required to complete this process to pass to the next grade.



By Brandon Key and Summer Bratcher

Aftershock 2009!

Campus Life is very excited to announce that they are sponsoring a concert at Veterans on May 8, 2009 from 6 o'clock till 9 o'clock. The name of the concert will be "Aftershock." A member of Campus Life says, "It is called Aftershock because if Jesus is to be the earthquake, then we will be the aftershock!" Chick-fil-a will be at the concert as well as the radio station, J93.3. The bands performing will be Varlago, The Phillip Scott Band, and Soul Sister Sally. All of these are Contemporary Christian Rock bands. The speakers for the event will be Corey Reid, and Justin Long. So come on out, Veterans, on May 8, 2009 for an evening full of fun an excitement!

By Bret Dunn

Caschona Robinson (1996-2009)

Recently Veterans Memorial tragically lost one of its sixth grade students, Caschona Robinson. Caschona was born on February 19, 1996 and died in a car accident on February 21, 2009. She had been thirteen years old for only two days. She was the daughter of LaToya Catrina Terrell and Scotty Robinson. She has five brothers and three sisters; Montavious, Marquavious, Devonte, Rometrick, Makai, Amber, Trinity, and Tachetra. She was the seventh child out of nine. She lived in Monroe when she was first born and later moved to Covington. Caschona went to Livingston Elementary School from Pre-K until fifth grade. Friends and family say she was a very loving, caring person and that there was almost nothing she would not do in order to help someone in need. She loved to run track and was looking forward to being on the Veterans track team next year. She was very outgoing, and a beautiful person inside. The Generals 360 staff spoke with Mr. Parker, one of her teachers. He says about Caschona, "Everyday she would come through my door with a big smile and acted like she wanted to be at school. She would call me "Mr. P" as soon as she saw me, and that brought joy to my morning." Natarshia and Chelsie Nolley were close friends with Caschona for quite a few years. When Chelsie and Caschona first became



friends, they were inseparable. Caschona loved helping others. She also enjoyed being around people who appreciated her and enjoyed having her around. Many say that realizing someone they loved is now gone makes them respect life more than ever. Natarshia Nolley says, "She has made me so happy and actually made me a better person. Her warm embrace and the way she would always long to hold my hand whenever we were together would make me feel so appreciative of her." when Caschona smiled at someone with her big dimples, it would make anyone feel better. Caschona has taught many people the true meaning of, "unconditional love." She will always be in the hearts of her peers, teachers, friends, and family.



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By Kimberley League and Kee-Kee Jordan

We'll miss you
Sweetie Pie!