

NOVEMBER 2010

GENERALS 360

ALL AROUND INFORMATION

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Powered by the Sun!

With all the budget cuts, Veterans is looking for ways to save money while still delivering high quality education to students. This year, Veterans' electricity bill has gone down with the help of Snapping Shoals EMC and Sun Power for Schools. On the northwest corner of the school, there is a Solar Panel that is powering a little bit of everything electric in the school. Snapping Shoals, a non-profit organization, was given a grant from Green Power to provide a school of their choice with a solar panel and they chose Veterans. They would do this for the school only if Ms.

Alexander would head up the program. There was a workshop which Ms. Alexander, Mr. Bigby, and Mr. Roberts (the teachers for sixth, seventh, and eighth grade sciences at the school) attended that Snapping Shoals hosted informing them about the solar panel. People may wonder how the solar panel works. With six panels and two layers of glass, sunlight filters through wires that connect to the electrical system in the school. Like the photosynthesis process, it captures the sun's rays and converts it to energy for the school. It can be compared to a solar powered calculator because likewise, it has to be cleaned every so often and won't work at night. The estimated cost of this device is around \$10,000, but because of Snapping Shoals' sponsorship, Veterans doesn't have to pay for any of this! Ms. Alexander says that she is proud of the great relationship Veterans has with Snapping Shoals. By Kennisa Ragland and Emma Golden



Generous General

Due to the downfall of the economy, many students cannot afford to purchase school supplies this year. Hearing this news from her church, Discover Point in Conyers, Georgia, seventh grader McKenzie Pettit donated twenty packs of paper, dividers and twenty binders to Veterans. These supplies will be given to students. McKenzie says that she donated the items to help out the less fortunate kids. This gesture was very generous of McKenzie, because she helped so many kids at Veterans. By Kennisa Ragland and Kya Walker

Community Pep Rally

On September 28, from 6:00-7:30 parents, students and faculty gathered at Veterans' back field to celebrate and honor some of the students' accomplishments. Football and softball players, cheerleaders and band members were all recognized at Veterans' third annual Community Pep Rally. Hotdogs, hamburgers and chips were served with a drink as refreshments. Mrs. Worman sold cookies that she and her FCCLA members baked. The coaches of each team announced their players while parents, friends and family cheered enthusiastically. With outstanding performances from the cheerleaders and the band, the 2010-2011 Community Pep Rally was a big success. By Kennisa Ragland and Dora Flynn



CORRECTION: In last month's issue, the football coaches were incorrectly listed. The 2010 Generals football coaches are Coach Cliff Roberts, Coach Kermit Robinson and Coach Buck Helm.

VETERANS MEMORIAL MIDDLE SCHOOL, 13357 BROWN BRIDGE RD., COVINGTON, GA, 30016, 770-385-6983

Rome, Georgia Pen Pals

Every eighth grade student in the state of Georgia is required to study Georgia authors at some point this year. While many of them are stuck with the typical assignment of writing biographies, Mrs. Scott's language arts class is taking a far more unique approach. Her students will be connecting with a class in Rome, Georgia, and each of the students will be assigned a pen pal. The pen pals will interview each other about the area they live in so that they can write a report about the other location. Both language Arts classes will be doing a report on the book, "My Losing Season," by Pat Conroy. The two classes will present their reports to each other via WebEx, which is a visual communication system using a web-cam. To throw in an even bigger twist, the rest of team eight red will also be participating. Each teacher will be incorporating their academic subject into this project in a creative way. The whole point of this out-of-the-box method is to demonstrate the way that subjects are linked. "This is one of the best ideas for a school project I've ever heard... It's going to be so much fun!" one student comments. "This project is definitely a great example of the creativity and dedication Veterans students and staff are so proud of." Cheers to Mrs. Scott for coming up with such an engaging assignment that her students will enjoy and remember for a long time.

By Elise McDonald



Robert's Rockets

At Veterans, teachers work hard to educate students in unique and interesting ways. One teacher in particular, Cliff Roberts, is helping his students by launching off rockets. This may not sound like much of an educational experiment, but it has science behind it and corresponds with the students' lesson. Eighth grade students are currently learning about Newton's Laws of Science and the rocket launching is demonstrating these laws. Mr. Roberts says that with experiments like this, "Science comes alive."

By Abby Vanderwolf and Kennisa Ragland

Pinwheels for Peace

On International Peace Day, September 21, over 200 colorful pinwheels spun in the breeze in front of the school. Veterans participated in this event and the art class created pinwheels to show their support for peace. The students began creating their pinwheels the week before. They drew colorful designs and on the back wrote their thoughts stating what they thought peace was all about. The pinwheels were displayed by the school's marquee on Peace Day. The art teacher, Christy Mortimer, says, "It is my hope that my students can make a visual statement of their feelings about what is going on in our world and in their lives." The idea behind setting out the pinwheels is that the wind will spread the ideas and feeling of peace throughout the world. Although this is only Veterans' second year participating in this event, it is becoming a yearly tradition.



By Abby Vanderwolf and Hailey Garner

Community Contributions For Awesome Activities

Donations from Smurfit Stone, a corrugated box manufacturer, and Publix on Brown Bridge Road



have been instrumental in the lessons in Mr. Hartman's Technology class at Veterans. These two community businesses have worked with Mr. Hartman to supply a great deal of materials for the seventh and eighth grade technology projects. With cardboard donated by Publix, the seventh grade technology classes were able to create a labyrinth of marble mazes. With the donation of tools and corrugated board from Smurfit Stone, the eighth grade students were able to design and build chairs completely made of corrugated board. The lessons learned by the



students through these hands-on materials were great explorations into the world of engineering. Thanks again to both of these wonderful community businesses.

The Ones Behind it All: The Generals 360 Team



The Generals 360 Staff: Top Row from Left to Right: Carley Lively, Kanai DeBerry, Elise McDonald, Kennisa Ragland, Kayla McCord, Kya Walker, Simeon Rogers, Middle Row: Courtney Coon, Jordyn White, Abby Vanderwolf, Taylee Lewis, Morella Briceno, Baylee Friedman. Bottom Row: Dora Flynn, Rebecca Merrell, Emma Golden, Gianina Vasquez, and Hailey Garner.

Last year's staff is off to high school, so there are new kids on the block! With fifteen eighth graders and three seventh graders, everyone in the 2010-2011 Publishing class works together to create the Generals 360. The newsletter is packed with sports, club news, and happenings around Veterans. Every day during enrichment, these talented, hard-working students meet in Mrs. Esguerra's room to publish the newsletter. Mrs. Mortimer's yearbook team also meets then, as many of the publishing students work on the yearbook as well. The Generals 360 is sent to hundreds of subscribers each month, including teachers, parents, and even the superintendent of Newton County Schools, Dr. Gary Matthews. After reading it, he replied, "I enjoyed reading the Generals 360. Its quality!" The Veterans newsletter has received great reviews ever since the class started five years ago. Mrs. Esguerra, the paper's editor, said that this year is going to be one of the best because the students are great writers, and are very teachable. Also, she mentioned it helps that she has more experience. The Veterans Generals 360 Staff is motivated, and ready to work on the newsletters to come.

By Kya Walker and Dora Flynn

Veterans on the Web

Veterans' website is one of the most helpful resources available for obtaining information about the school. On the website, parents and students can find teachers' e-mails and eLearn accounts, a calendar, schedules, information about clubs, teacher links, the lunch menu, Generals 360 newsletters, and much more. The website is created for students, parents and faculty at Veterans. It is maintained by Mrs. Blackerby, the school's technology advisor. She gathers information from faculty and students around the school, so the website is a group effort. Mrs. Blackerby says, "The most useful part of the website for parents and students is the home page. It has everything on there, and links for more detailed information." On the home page, parents and students can find the address and phone number of Veterans, events for the current month, bus numbers, some pictures of the school, and links to help find any information about the school. The website also contains a link to let students see their grades, schedule, and attendance called "Parent Portal".



On the "Parents Link" on the homepage, parents can find: Parents Still Make a Difference, Parent Pointers, The Parent Institute, a Parent Reference Manual, Georgia Virtual Academy, etc. Any of these links can help parents know their kid's school, help out with the school, and get their kids more involved. On the "Students Link", students can link to eLearn, Destiny Library, Study Island, anything they might need for Language Arts, Science, Social Studies, Math, research, and even games for when they get done with their schoolwork. The website holds everything parents and students need or want to know about Veterans.

Link: http://www.newtoncountyschools.org/veterans/Index_04.htm

By Baylee Friedman and Rebecca Merrell

Teachers Show Their Spirit!



Students may wonder why teachers have begun to wear jeans on Friday. Although it is good for our teachers to maintain a professional appearance throughout the week, "Jeans Days" give the teachers an opportunity to have a break from the normal, and show off their school spirit by wearing school apparel. It is a tradition at Veterans to have spirit days, where teachers are able to wear jeans, and a collared shirt that is a school color. The only difference is that Friday has become the established day of the week to wear jeans, and sometimes sports team jerseys may even be spotted on a teacher or two! Jeans Day is just another way of showing school spirit!

By Courtney Coon and Emma Golden

GEMS Raises Money for the African Water Crisis

The 2010-2011 G.E.M.S club members hosted a fundraiser for the Active Water Organization to raise money for the African Water Crisis. It began September 10, 2010 and ended on October 8. This fundraiser did not profit the G.E.M.S. Instead, the money went to build wells in Africa for communities that have no



near access to clean water sources. Many people in their communities have to walk an average of six miles to get water that's contaminated. In Africa, every fifteen seconds, a child dies from the bacteria-filled water he or she drinks. To raise money, the G.E.M.S club hosted a walk for each grade. The students walked around the bus ramp on October 11 and 12 during enrichment to support the effort. The club also had a variety of fundraiser merchandise to sell, including silicone wristbands and T-shirts for ten dollars each that said "Ask me about the African Water Crisis." Students were able to sell paper footprints with facts about the African Water Crisis for 50 cents each, and they were hung by the G.E.M.S members around the school to encourage the continuance of the fundraising. Many students stepped up their game to help raise money for the people of Africa and proudly raised \$1,143. After the cost of the fundraising merchandise, \$965 will be sent to help build wells for pure water resources. This will be combined with other donations from other sources to build the wells. Anyone interested in making a donation, can visit www.activewater.org.

By Kayla McCord and Carley Lively

Chicken Biscuit Thursdays!

Coach Sammons, the head coach of the Veterans softball team, is hosting a fundraiser to raise money for the team. The event is called Chicken Biscuit Thursdays which is hosted every first and third Thursday of each month. The idea is to raise enough money before next season for the softball team to purchase a field of their own and possibly more equipment. The estimated goal amount of money that Coach Sammons is trying to reach is \$1000. A few students were curious if chicken biscuit Thursdays would eventually stop once the goal was attained but Coach Sammons says he will continue selling the chicken biscuits even after the target is reached to purchase more equipment for the team. As of now, Coach Sammons has raised a good amount selling the chicken biscuits, but still has a long way to go.

By Kanai DeBerry and Simeon Rogers

French At VMMS

Veterans' foreign language teacher, Mr. Kakavelakis, better known as Mr. K, gave all of his connections students a project, to weave as many French words as possible into an English story. Each of his connections classes were supposed to vote for their three favorite stories.

One story, in particular, stood out to Mr. K. Out of all of his students, he chose sixth grade student Lexus Johnson's story as his favorite. She skillfully weaved thirty-two French words into her English story. Even though she placed fourth among her classmates' vote, Mr. K says he chose this story as *his* favorite because, "It used elements of Greek mythology and it was very imaginative!" Here is an excerpt from her story:

"I'm **Claire**. I am 12 years old and I live in a **maison** near long tip in California. Nothing is normal about me. Weird things happen to me. ...I have what I call a connection with water. It is really the only place where I can think and feel free. No one, but my mom understands. We've **toujours** been **ensemble**.... I asked if I could go swimming **une** last time. She said: '**d'accord**'. ...I went to the pool and jumped at the bottom. I started counting... **un, deux, trois, quatre, cinq, six, sept, huit, neuf, dix**. I heard a whistle. I swam up and saw my mom. She looked worried. She said we had to leave. I was getting in the **voiture** when I heard it. It was the worst thing I have ever seen. The green overgrown snake in my Greek mythology book! Like I said before, **rien** is normal in my life!"

When asked, "How did it feel that he chose you out of all his students?", she responded, "It felt like a new experience because it has never happened before and felt cool to be recognized by a teacher."

By Michael Pitts and Kevin Singh



End of the Season!

Although the softball season is over, head coach Neal Sammons and assistant coach Beth Bowman are still proud of the team. Coach Sammons and Coach Bowman have been coaching at Veterans for four exciting years. Even though they tied for third at the New Rock League Championship, Coach Sammons felt the athletes were very capable of winning the New Rock League Championship. Every athlete has different capabilities and all have talent and dedication. The team worked very hard by practicing at Turner Lake Complex every day after school.



The New Rock League Championship tournament was held Friday, October 1 and Saturday, October 2. Even though the athletes did not come away with a victory, they still finished strong, by winning their first game Friday, but losing next day. The Lady Generals fought hard all year and finished strong with a 7-5 record overall. The Lady Generals would like to thank everyone who came out and supported them this season.

By Jordyn White and Kayla McCord

Sad Day for the Generals

The Generals Football season at Veterans is over. The boys fought hard and showed great determination and spirit, but were not able to take the championship this year. The last regular season game, a win against the Indian Creek Panthers on October 13, gave them a record of 3 wins and 3 losses. This year Veterans had a young team, with more seventh grade players than eighth. Coach Roberts says one of their goals this season was to work hard to improve every day. The win against Indian Creek took the boys to the semi-finals. On Saturday, September 30, the Generals laid it all on the line at Evans Stadium playing the Davis Eagles in the semi-finals but were defeated, ending their chance at the championship. With so many returning seventh grade players next year, the coaches and team are already planning to work hard to restore that championship trophy to Veterans' front lobby. By Giannia Vasquez and Hailey Garner



How Hard Do They Work?

Students and parents sometimes don't understand all the tasks educators perform to effectively teach students. Through all the lesson plans, preparation, and the sweat of teaching a class of approximately thirty students every period, they do everything they can to make sure students succeed and are well prepared for the CRCT at the end of the year. Recently, staff members of the Generals 360 went behind the scenes to get the inside scoop on the many responsibilities of teachers. Some coach sports teams; others sponsor clubs and student organizations. They serve on school committees and meet with fellow teachers to collaborate. Staff members spoke with a couple of teachers, and Ms. Dunn was able to shed some light on the many responsibilities of Veterans' teachers. Not only does Ms. Dunn teach social studies, but she is also a team leader for 8 Red and the Social Studies Department Chair. To start off her day, she arrives at school at approximately 7:45 in the morning and officially ends her school hours at 4:00 p.m., but she often stays as late as 6:00. Within those hours, she meets with administrators and other teachers, grades papers and records them, contacts parents, monitors hallways, the lunch room, and restrooms, in addition to preparing her lessons for the upcoming day. She is required to attend various meetings, such as TFT, (Teacher Focus Tuesday) and serve on an RTI team, which is designed to help students who struggle in school. She attends meetings at the County Office, attends meetings at Eastside once a month, and she is in charge of planning field trips, like the 8th grade Washington trip. Not only does she work long hours, but also works some weekends and during the summer. For about a week during her summer, she helped compile Progress Monitoring Exams (PMEs). Being a teacher is one of the most difficult and sometimes unappreciated jobs, but the rewards of seeing students succeed can make it all worthwhile.



By Taylor Lewis and Morella Briceno

Worman's Home Projects

By helping the community in their own way, students in Family and Consumer Science classes are allowed to pick a "Home Project" that is meaningful to them. Many options are offered to the students and each student chooses an individual project that benefits their home or community. These projects allow Mrs. Worman's students to understand how they themselves can interact with the community and with the world around them. According to Mrs. Worman, "The reason I extended my class to include their homes, is because it's real and helps students identify concerns, set goals, form plans, act on them, and then follow them." One of the more popular projects is donating to a local food pantry. The Food Pantry is a local group that gives food to families in need. With students and other citizens donating canned goods, they are helping provide counseling and other support systems to help people with life difficulties and overcome poverty. When students contribute, they are helping the community by extending a hand to people in need and they also raise awareness of the economic problems in our society



By Rebecca Merrell and Jordyn White

Fall Fundraiser

As most students know, schools hold fundraisers to raise money for different school productions. Veterans Fall Fundraiser started on September 24, 2010. The theme was "Peace, Love, and Happy Selling!" Veterans held a pep rally on September 24, 2010 to get students excited for the fundraiser. Students tried to sell as many products as possible before the fundraiser ended on October 13, 2010. Not only could products be sold face to face, but also online. This factor made selling easier and safer for Veterans students. Examples of items sold range from cookie dough to jewelry, tote bags to cooking utensils, and much more. The incentives for the fundraiser include cash prizes, invitations to the VMMS "Minute to Win it" Lottery, the "Peace Out Limo Lunch", and an iPod Touch. The top seller from each grade level received fifty dollars in cash. Every year Veterans has a high student participation in the fundraiser, and this year was no exception.



By Taylor Lewis and Kya Walker



Above, Marine Technology Club members work together to come up with a solution to clean a mini "oil spill". Club sponsor Ms. Pinella created this project at a recent meeting to allow students to explore various oil removal methods and encourage hands-on learning.

Editorials are not a normal feature of the Generals 360, but occasionally we will present one to our readers which is especially moving and meaningful. Below is one such article.

What Matters Most

Kids complain every day about the tedious things in life, such as a bad hair day or the little brother who won't stop stealing their favorite football. Most seldom stop to think about those who face life altering circumstances every day. Like my friend whose mom is suffering from brain cancer. Her bravery during such a tumultuous time in her life is a marvel. It's incredible that although she could very easily give up hope and allow the problem to consume every bit of her, and even though the doctors and statistics present a dim picture, she continues to stay strong. What character she has, to be able to maintain who she is even though her very core has been rattled. My dear friend has remained so entirely composed through all of this that few people besides her closest friends are even aware of her situation. She does not ask for the pity of others because she does not need it. You'll never hear her complain because she and her family are so fully occupied with making the best of the rest of her mom's life that there is no time to waste. They choose to swim in that which they have been blessed instead of drown in that which they have not.

*It seems to me that more often than not, those who have cause to grumble aren't likely to do so, while many people look for things to gripe about. We should all take a page from my friend's book. Don't let a bad situation deteriorate you. Be generous and compassionate even on the days that you feel deprived and ignored. Test the boundaries of **your** character and see what you discover about yourself. Be thankful for what you have and don't worry about what you don't. And the next time you catch yourself starting to complain, consider my friend and the raw valor she shows during her mom's battle with cancer.*

By Elise McDonald