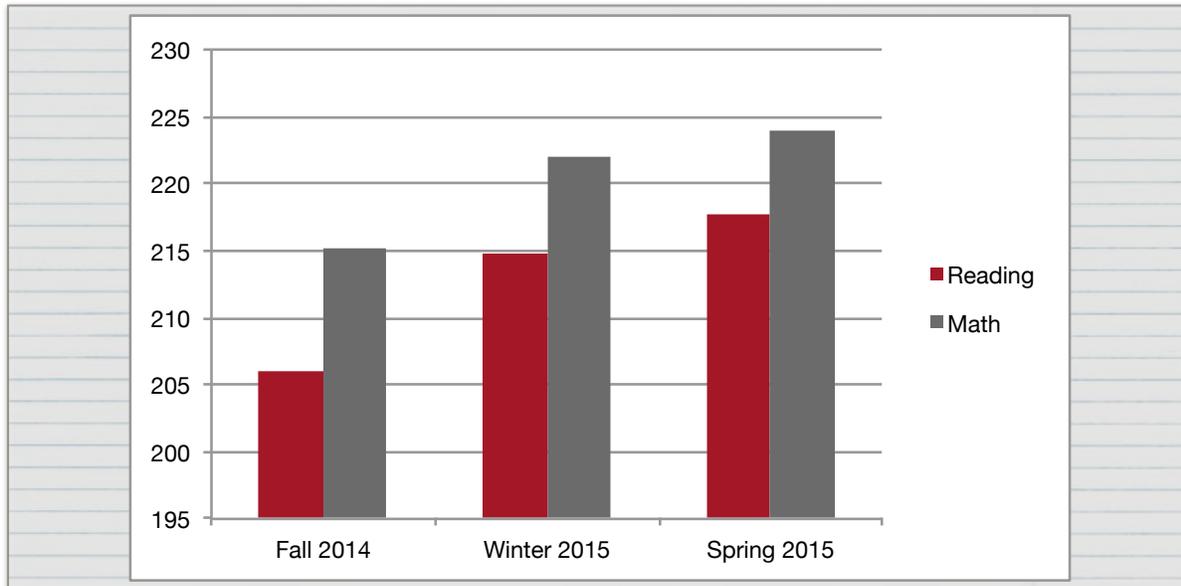




Extraordinary Academic Growth

Vertus NWEA Results Show Huge Leaps in Student Achievement



We are proud to share our students' scores on the widely used and nationally respected NWEA MAP test. As you can see from the bar graph above, our students made enormous gains this year and proved to themselves that they are capable of remarkable academic achievements.

Vertus students took the NWEA MAP test three times this year: once in September 2014, once in January 2015, and once in June 2015. Some highlights from this data appear at right. We could not be more proud of our Vertus men!

Reading

- 79% of Vertus students met or exceeded expected growth
- 2 years' progress in only 9 months
- On average, students made more than 450% of expected progress

Mathematics

- 75% of Vertus students met or exceeded expected growth
- More than 1.5 years' progress in only 9 months
- On average, students made more than 300% of expected progress



BUILDING LITERACY RELATIONSHIPS: SUNY Brockport graduate students tutor Vertus men. Details on p. 2 of this issue.



E-NABLING WORK AT VERTUS: See p. 5 for an update on student employment with the e-NABLE Project.



SUGGESTIONS FOR NEWSLETTER STORIES? Contact Naomi Geier at 585.481.4499 or ngeier@vertusschool.org.

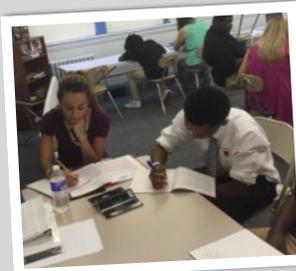
Unique Partnership Between Vertus and SUNY Brockport Brings Literacy to Life

July 6, 2015, the first day of our summer quarter, brought not only the return of our students, but also the arrival of 32 newcomers to our building: a class of graduate students in the Department of Education and Human Development at SUNY Brockport, here to provide one-on-one literacy tutoring to 45 of our Vertus men.

By working with our students at Vertus, the Brockport interns are acquiring contact hours for EDI 745.31: Literacy Internship II, a course that requires them to perform 50 hours of small-group or one-to-one literacy teaching with an adolescent. By working with the Brockport interns, our Vertus students are earning .25 credit and engaging in many hours of intensive, personalized, in-depth literacy work with highly qualified educators-in-training, all of whom are licensed teachers.

The curriculum for our five-week course was developed for Scholastic by Dr. Alfred W. Tatum, an African-American scholar of education whose research focuses on engaging African-American adolescent male students as readers and writers. The curriculum, called *ID: Voice-Vision-Identity*, is built around four core “platforms:”

EXPLORING LITERATURE



Vertus students and Brockport interns learning and working together.

Define Self, Become Resilient, Engage Others, and Build Capacity. It includes a choice of several novels for our students to read and a number of PowerPoints and other materials to facilitate discussion of issues related to identity and African-American culture.

The program is taught and supervised by Karen Sue Geier, a veteran literacy instructor with over 30 years of experience in RCSD and Monroe II BOCES. Both Vertus and Brockport students are enjoying the program and look forward to several more weeks!

VERTUS SCHOLARS AND MAN OF THE MONTH

The Man of the Month award honors a Vertus student who lives out the virtues of Courage, Leadership, and Responsibility on a daily basis. Students nominate their peers for consideration and the staff works together to choose one monthly winner from the nominees. Vertus Scholar awards are granted monthly by our teachers in recognition of academic excellence in a particular subject. Congratulations to all these young men for their outstanding achievements!



Giovanni Cintron
May 2015



Diondre Williams
Math



Brandon Purdie
Social Studies



David Macartney
Science



Justin McGill
ELA

Man of the Month

May 2015 Scholars



Vertus Charter School

COURAGE, LEADERSHIP, RESPONSIBILITY

FROM OUR STUDENTS

New York, New York: Vertus' First Overnight Field Trip a Success



Left to right: Antonio Rucinski, Braijon Scott, Charles Ruffin, Jakeith Mosley, Spencer Burns, and Diondre Williams. (Not pictured: Selavantez Bennett-Yawn.)

On Tuesday, June 16, 2015, seven Vertus students and two Vertus staff set out for New York City. In the wee hours of the morning of Thursday, June 18, they returned with souvenirs, pictures, stories, and the shared experience of having seen two excellent theater productions, one on Broadway and one Off-Broadway. Here, they share these productions with our



Chaperones Vinny Alexander and Naomi Geier, photobombed by Diondre Williams and Antonio Rucinski.

Theater Review: STOMP!

by Braijon Scott

...

Matchboxes, lighters, brooms, and—get this—even inner tubes. You wouldn't think to make music out of those objects; however, the cast of STOMP! did just that.

Some of my favorite numbers included when they used matchboxes to make music—I've never seen anything like that before. I also have never seen people capable of using Zippo lighters to make a beat. The atmosphere was incredible.

To me, personally, the show was unexpected. I didn't think it would be as amazing as it was and I think the cast of STOMP! did an outstanding job.



The theatre was insane; it had objects on the wall that stretched out into the crowd and there was a space where members of the cast could climb up and be above the stage.



LES MISERABLES: Songs Reviewed by Students

“Do You Hear the People Sing?”

This song is sung by a group of students who are French revolutionaries that are fighting against the authorities for their rights. An important moment to capture is that the students stay and fight, even when they know they could possibly die. The students do die, but their cause was fought for. The mood this song has is an amplified mood because when you hear it, it makes you feel powered and ready to fight for your rights. It's like a marching song. What I especially liked about this song was that it shows how the students fought for what they believed in.

—Antonio Rucinski

“One Day More”

The song “One Day More” is sung by the whole cast. The moment it captures is everyone coming together at the end of Act One. The mood this song conveys is anticipation, which is conveyed by the last words of the song: “Tomorrow we’ll discover what our God in Heaven has in store—one more dawn, one more day, one day more.” I especially like that everyone comes together to sing.

—Diondre Williams

“On My Own”

This song is sung by a character in *Les Miserables* called Eponine. What happens to this character is during the show she delivers a message and on her way back she gets shot but does not feel it. Then afterward she comes back to where Marius is and she slowly dies. The mood of this part of the play is loving because Eponine is in love with Marius. The way that the song conveys the moment is that some parts are happy to the point that it makes you laugh. Then when she gets shot the music slows down and the play gets depressing and sad to the point that it makes you cry.

—Selavantez Bennett-Yawn

“Bring Him Home”

The song “Bring Him Home” is sung by Jean Valjean, an ex-convict who spent 17 years in jail and broke parole. He eventually becomes a good, honest, and a loving man. This song captures the moment when Valjean is asking God to bring Marius safely home from the war. He also mentions that if God wants to take someone, He should take Valjean and leave Marius safe to stay with Cosette, his adopted daughter. The mood this song conveys to me is a scared, worried feeling and makes me wonder if Marius will make it home safe. This is heard by the long drag on the words, the lyrics, and the slow, sad, violin music. I especially like the fact that Valjean is caring for someone who is not direct family.

—Charles Ruffin

“Empty Chairs at Empty Tables”

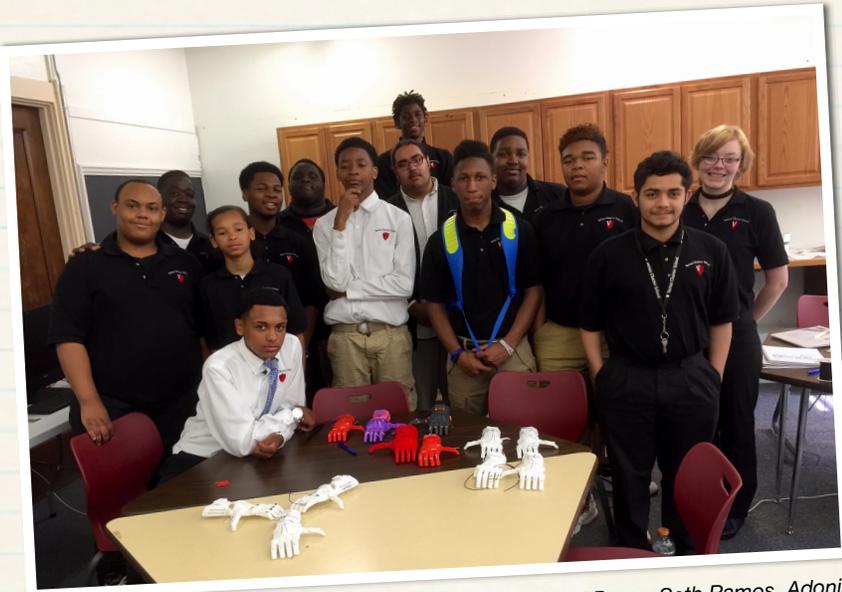
Marius sings this song, and he feels very guilty about all his friends dying in the revolution. The important moment is death in sight and the mood is unhappy and unpleasant. The slowness makes it sound sad and the way he sings it sounds unhappy. I didn't favor the song because it's too depressing and sad.

—Spencer Burns



Our group in the lobby before the performance.

e-NABLE Project and Student Workers Thrive During First Two Weeks at Vertus



Left to right: Justin Hampton, Program Coordinator Jamaal Peavy, Seth Ramos, Adonis Garcia, Justin McGill, Christian McClain, Lashawn Cason, Antonio Rucinski, Lee Cooper, Spencer Burns, Charles Ruffin, Je'Taime Bardques, Giovonni Cintron, and Program Instructor Elizabeth Jackson.

High school summers are often a season for sleeping in, but not for our 12 Vertus students employed at the e-NABLE Project. An e-NABLE day begins at around 7:30, when students begin to arrive at the building and make their way to the new e-NABLE lab on the second floor. By 8:00, they are in their seats, ready to learn the day's material and begin the day's work.

Our 12 student workers, selected from nearly 30 highly qualified applicants during a rigorous process this June, are the first of what we hope will be many Vertus e-NABLE employees, working 20 hours per week for 6 weeks during our summer session thanks to generous funding from the City of Rochester's Summer of Opportunity program.

So what exactly is the e-NABLE Project? Founded by Dr. Jon Schull at RIT, it is a worldwide community of people from all

walks of life who use 3D printers to make prosthetic hands. These hands cost a fraction of what a traditional prosthesis costs and can be made anywhere where 3D printers can be found.

As of this summer, that now includes Vertus; we have purchased three beautiful Tinkerine 3D printers for use in this project and throughout the coming school year. Our 12 employees are learning how to print the e-NABLE hands in 20 to 30 pieces and then assemble them using other materials and testing protocols. Under the instruction of Elizabeth Jackson, a third-year engineering student at RIT who has been closely involved with the e-NABLE Project for over a year, our young men will also learn how to use 3D modeling software and build their skills in computer-based manufacturing and design.

"This is a really unique opportunity," Elizabeth says of the e-NABLE Project at Vertus. "They're getting paid while they're in high school, so it's also a learning experience because we're hoping to mentor them and get them ready for the work world." Preceptor Jamaal Peavy is also creating and teaching a workplace-readiness curriculum that includes the creation of a career portfolio. Says student worker Charles Ruffin, "I like the fact that every day we come on time. We're hard-working and it proves our responsibility."

In addition to learning about workplaces in general and advanced manufacturing in particular, our students are benefiting from the opportunity to help others in a very tangible way. "Building prosthetic hands for people who need them so that they can have a hand and feel like they're a much better person—that's what we do to help people," says student worker Justin McGill.

Vertus will seek funding to continue 3D printing projects during the school year and for next summer. We are proud of this first intrepid group of Vertus employees for starting something new!



RIT's Dr. Jon Schull, founder of e-NABLE, spoke to Vertus students on their first day at work.

MEET OUR DEANS AND OFFICE STAFF



Vinny Alexander

“My favorite thing about working at Vertus is being able to build strong relationships with students.”



Joe Carter

“My favorite thing about working at Vertus is building relationships with the young kids of today.”



Donielle Davis

“I love working with the young men on a daily basis and watching them begin to understand their potential.”



Ricky Norris

“I enjoy building relationships with our future leaders and working with outstanding staff.”



Josh Pincus

“My favorite thing is getting to know the kids and helping them out.”



Jemeul Thompson

“My favorite thing about working at Vertus is the students, and I think we have a great staff as well.”



Jeanne Wegman

“I love getting to know each of the children individually.”

About Vertus

Vertus Charter School prepares leaders of character for the community and the workplace through career preparation, personalized curriculum, and strong relationships. Vertus Charter School is a tuition-free, public charter high school for young men.

About Our Newsletter

This newsletter is brought to you by Naomi Geier, Program Manager and English Instructor, and by Student Interns Jakeith Mosley, Eric Porter, and Braijon Scott. Please contact Ms. Geier at 585.481.4499 or ngeier@vertusschool.org with any questions or feedback.



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