



# Vertus Charter School

*COURAGE, LEADERSHIP, RESPONSIBILITY*

2 AUSTIN ST.  
ROCHESTER, NY 14606

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## From Our CEO

We are fast approaching the end of our third quarter and summer will soon be upon us! Our summer quarter begins on Monday, July 6 and goes until Friday, August 21. The school day is 9am to 3pm Monday through Thursday and 9am to 12:30pm on Friday.

In June, all our students will take the NWEA test. When our students took this test last January, they made on average an entire year's academic progress in the four months they had been in school. Most of our students exceeded expected growth. This June, students will receive a \$20 gift card for meeting or exceeding expected academic growth in reading and a \$20 gift card for the same in math. We want our students to try hard and to be rewarded for their effort.

Our innovative year-round model is designed to prepare for success in college and careers; this summer's additional learning time is absolutely essential for our young men. Students are expected to arrive on time each day. All students with better than 85% attendance will be eligible for a trip to Darien Lake at no cost to families during the last week of the quarter.

As always, thank you for partnering with us to help your student succeed.



## Vertus Students Explore RIT on Spring Campus Visit

On Tuesday, May 19, for the second time this year, Vertus took a large group of students to explore the Rochester Institute of Technology. These visits connect our young men with the college experience and showcase the careers available to those who pursue STEM disciplines (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) in higher education.

Students met with representatives from MOCHA, which stands for Men of Color, Honor, and Ambition, to hear from them about their experiences as RIT students. They also ate in Grace Watson Dining Hall, received a campus tour, and watched a presentation about game design given by faculty at the MAGIC Center. Our Vertus men behaved respectfully and responsibly throughout the trip. As always, we are very proud of them!



**ICONIC ARCHITECTURE:** Students contemplate RIT's Student Innovation Hall, home of the MAGIC Center.



**CUTTING-EDGE TECHNOLOGY:** Exploring touch-screen Dell desktops in the MAGIC Center was a highlight of the trip.



**SUGGESTIONS FOR NEWSLETTER STORIES?** Contact Naomi Geier at 585.481.4499 or [ngeier@vertusschool.org](mailto:ngeier@vertusschool.org).

# Vertus Prepares to Bring RIT's e-NABLE Project to Campus this Summer

What is e-NABLE? Quite simply, one of the most cutting-edge social entrepreneurship projects in the world right now, recently featured on NPR and the front page of the *New York Times*. A group of people across the globe, organized via a central web portal set up at RIT, use 3D printers to build prosthetic hands for children who are missing a hand, usually due to a birth defect. Participants can do everything from designing the hands from scratch to simply downloading the blueprints, printing the pieces at home, and assembling them.

Hand deformities are among the most common birth defects worldwide, but most families in the world cannot afford a prosthetic hand. Traditional prosthetic hands cost many thousands of dollars and children, as they grow, require hands in several different sizes. Using e-NABLE blueprints, free open-source software, and an average-quality 3D printer, a hand can be produced for \$50 to \$60 and given to a family for free.

Liz Jackson, an RIT co-op student who has worked full-time making e-NABLE hands for the past year, will be bringing e-NABLE to Vertus in the form of 12 summer jobs, funded in collaboration with Rochester's Summer

## E-NABLING THE FUTURE



*Antonio Rucinski learns to assemble an e-NABLE hand from RIT student Liz Jackson, who will help run our e-NABLE summer program.*

of Opportunity Program. Students will be paid \$1,000 for six weeks to design, produce, and assemble the hands. They will learn to use 3D printers, which are vital to the field of advanced manufacturing, and gain a valuable introduction to the field of engineering.

In order to be eligible, students must have completed a minimum number of credits, have an 85% attendance record for the year, and complete an application that will be made available in June. We are thrilled about this extraordinary opportunity!

## 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!



Je'Taime Bardques  
April 2015



Divine Williams  
Math



David Macartney  
Social Studies



Adonis Garcia  
Science



Giovanni Cintron  
ELA

**Man of the Month**

**April 2015 Scholars**



**Vertus Charter School**

*COURAGE, LEADERSHIP, RESPONSIBILITY*

# FROM OUR STUDENTS

## A Strong Start: Vertus's First Year In Review

by **Braijon Scott**



When Vertus first opened its doors on September 15, 2014, I personally had butterflies in my stomach because it was a new start. I felt that it would be different from normal schools, but I tried it and I am doing ten times better now than last year. I'm sure that the teachers and preceptors were anxious just as much as the students were. There were many questions about how the school would run and if the school would make it, but we showed ambition—and yes, there were many challenges. There will always be challenges. But we conquered what the critics had to throw at us and we made it to a more promising place in a school system where



*Enthusiastic students in the hall at afternoon dismissal!*



*Eric Porter with Dr. Mac*



### **Dr. Mac on Vertus's First Year**

What's been really great is meeting all the young men who are here and watching them develop and change and grow. It's a lot like I imagined it would be because Mr. White and I know what high school students are like, but it's our first time in Rochester and our first time with our boys. There have been things we had to learn about what our students and staff are like so that we can all be a team together for the first time—and that's been very exciting.

*Clockwise from left: the many faces of Co-Founder Mr. White; Preceptor Justin Bray with Eric Porter; Dean Ricky Norris with Braijon Scott.*



# STUDENT INTERVIEW: Teacher Mark Broz

Interviewed by Jakeith Mosley

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## What made you want to teach at Vertus?

What interested me about Vertus was the unique approach they take towards using technology in the classroom as well as trying to provide each student with their own personalized classes. That's something that no other school I've been at has actually ever done. I also found it a very interesting opportunity to come teach in the inner city. Before that, I mostly taught out in Alaska in a very rural area.

## How far away is Rochester from the town you lived in?

I'd have to look at a map! So if we look... the town of Kipnuk is right here, close to the Bering Sea, so if we use the scale, which is about 1,000 miles... it's about 6,000 miles from Rochester.

## How long did you live and teach in Alaska?

I lived and taught there for five years. Before that, I substitute-taught in Illinois for two years.

## Did you see any bears?

I never saw any bears. I ate some bear, but I never saw any. Not living, anyway.

## You ate bears?

Yup! I've eaten a polar bear. In a stew. It was chewy and it had a very strong flavor. It wasn't bad!

## What was the most surprising thing about life in Alaska?

It was interesting living without running water. So if you think about everything you need running water for, to be able to figure out a way around all those daily tasks, that was something that my students did every day. For one year, I also lived without running water.

## How did you keep in touch with your family and friends?

They didn't have cell phones out there until 2010. Before that, you would have to have a calling card to call home.

So I wouldn't call home that often—maybe once every two months—but they did have the internet. It was just *really* slow. So when I got on the internet, I would be able to write emails or do internet chatting, but not Skype. The internet wasn't fast enough.



*The Northern Lights in Kipnuk, Alaska. Photo by Mark Broz.*

## What happened in Alaska that made you want to become a photographer?

So in Alaska, there are these things in the sky called the Northern Lights, the Aurora Borealis, and they were probably the most phenomenal thing I've ever seen in my life. And I tried to take a picture of them with my camera and I couldn't get it to work, no matter what I did. I'm seeing this phenomenal thing in the sky, right? And I can't take a picture of it. I'm trying everything I know and nothing is working. I got so frustrated that I just said, "I need to be able to do this." So I bought a camera and I bought some books on how to take pictures, and I studied and I figured it out.

# VERTUS PHOTO JOURNAL

## A Trip to City Hall

“I think having the opportunity to meet the mayor of our city was excellent for the students because she talked about her own experiences, what formed her on her way to becoming the mayor, you know, the community support, her church, her school, and she gave inspirational messages to the students.”

—Norris Woods



Norris Woods, Jevon Henry, Christian McClain, Jamaal Peavy, and Mayor Lovely Warren



Isaiah Ficklin and Mayor Lovely Warren



Justin Hampton, Selavantez Bennett-Yawn, Justin McGill, David Macartney, Jon'Dale Patterson, Nahcer Scott, Je'Taime Bardques, Seth Ramos, Jevon Henry, Mayor Lovely Warren, Norris Woods, Ricky Bogan, Lashawn Cason, Christian McClain, Isaiah Ficklin, and Jamaal Peavy

“It was a fun experience that I got to go to City Hall and meet the mayor, and I would like to do it again sometime.”

—Isaiah Ficklin

“I liked City Hall because we got to meet the mayor and we watched the budget plan of how the city's money was going to be spent and how jobs would come to Rochester soon.”

—David Macartney



Nahcer Scott, Justin McGill, Je'Taime Bardques, and Jon'Dale Patterson

“The budget meeting, that was really interesting because they talked about what they're using the city's money for and how it's going to help the community and other schools. It was really fun.”

—Je'Taime Bardques



First slide of budget meeting presentation

“I think it was a great experience for the kids to see what their elected officials do. I think the trip made it real to them because they see the mayor on the news but, you know, to actually be able to see these people, shake their hand, to see that they're actually real people—I think that made a huge impact on a lot of the kids.”

—Jamaal Peavy

# MEET OUR TEACHERS

“What’s your favorite thing about working at Vertus?”



**José Barocio**

“My favorite thing about working at Vertus is watching students learn and grow.”



**Mark Broz**

“My favorite thing about working at Vertus is facing a lot of new challenges.”



**Naomi Geier**

“I so enjoy getting to know our students, both as learners and as people.”



**Shira Goldberg**

“I love to watch the students and staff be successful.”



**Matt Owlett**

“I like that we can give students more personalized instruction.”



**Matt Rollins**

“I love watching students gain confidence in their abilities and experience the thrill of achievement.”



**Fran Schenk**

“I love seeing students become successful.”

## 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](mailto:ngeier@vertusschool.org) with any questions or feedback.



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