Vertus Charter School

COURAGE, LEADERSHIP, RESPONSIBILITY

2 AUSTIN ST.
ROCHESTER, NY 14606

OCTOBER/NOVEMBER 2015
VOLUME 8

A Note From Dr. Mac

We have reached the end of our first quarter—holiday vacation is almost here! As progress reports go home to families, this is a good time to review some of the details of how our students earn credits at Vertus.

Vertus Charter School has a mastery-based system in which each student moves at his own pace. We divide our online courses into four sections, each worth .25 credit. As in all other schools in New York, the requirements to graduate high school are to earn **22 credits** and pass **5 Regents exams**.

We are working with each student to make sure he knows what credits he has and what he still needs to complete. If our students come to school and work every day, there is plenty of time in our school year to accomplish this in four years. Having good attendance and working productively in the Learning Labs leads to success at Vertus.

In closing, we invite all family members to attend the first meeting of our Vertus Family Organization:

Vertus Family Organization Meeting

Tuesday, January 12, 5:30pm-7:00pm

Dinner and childcare provided

RSVP to pwhite@vertusschool.org or (585) 747-8911

Vertus Students Honored at First Annual Vertus Blazer Ceremony

On Saturday, November 14, Vertus Charter School hosted its first annual Blazer Ceremony at Nazareth Elementary School on Lake Ave. The event was attended by about 75 Vertus families and featured addresses from students, staff, and guest speaker Dr. Leonard Brock. At the conclusion of the ceremony, our young men received their blazers and proudly crossed the stage wearing a tangible symbol of belonging to the Vertus community.

The red Vertus blazer is worn on Fridays, on field trips, and at other special events throughout the year. To earn the blazer, students had to average 85% attendance for at least one month, memorize the Vertus creed, and demonstrate the ability to greet a visitor "Vertus style" (with a firm handshake and a mature introduction).

Vertus extends heartfelt congratulations to our blazer recipients!

BLAZER CEREMONY: See p. 5 for more photographs from our first annual Blazer Ceremony in November.

CHARACTER AWARDS: Complete lists of our weekly and monthly award winners appear on pp. 3 and 4.

SUGGESTIONS FOR NEWSLETTER STORIES? Contact Naomi Geier at 646.483.9548 or ngeier@vertusschool.org.

Vertus Welcomes Two New Staff Members to the Office and Learning Labs

Two new faces can be seen around the building at Vertus these days! Jason Trzeciak, our Interim Business Manager, and Kelsey Peterson, our newest Lab Manager, have joined the Vertus team. We are lucky and happy to have them both on board.

Ms. Peterson is originally from Rochester; she graduated from Churchville schools and went on to study Psychology at Stonybrook University on Long Island. After graduation, she road-tripped around America with a friend before deciding to settle in Colorado for a while, where she worked on a ranch providing experiential learning for at-risk youth. Love of her hometown brought her back to Rochester, where she is very happy to be serving at Vertus as our newest Lab Manager. In her spare time, she likes to swim, hike, explore the city, and spend time with animals whenever possible.

Mr. Trzeciak, whose last name is pronounced "ZHE-check," is a native of Naples and has also lived in Albany, Florida, and Indiana in addition to Rochester. He joined Vertus as a part-time data coordinator earlier this year before stepping in as our Interim Business Manager. His day-to-day work is now "to manage student, employee, and staff data; take care of accounts payable and receivable; and handle day-to-day management of the office." When not at school, he mountain-bikes, skateboards, snowboards, gardens, and plays the drums (though generally not all at once).

If you see either of these folks in the building, be sure to stop and say hello!

NEW FACES AT VERTUS

Kelsey Peterson, Lab Manager, and Jason Trzeciak, Interim Business Manager, are the two newest members of our Vertus staff.

CAREER CORNER

Wegmans Executive Shares Tips for Workplace Success

Karen Wegman, Hillside Work Scholarship Coordinator for Wegmans, has been helping young people to succeed in their first jobs for 13 years! She describes her work as "helping prepare students for jobs, helping students be successful once they obtain the jobs, and helping them achieve success beyond graduation from high school. We [at Wegmans] love the energy and the excitement that teenagers can bring into our environment—it's great for us and it's great for our customers." Vertus student Savon Scott now works at Wegmans and, with Ms. Wegman's help, we hope to support other Vertus students working there in the near future.

Karen Wegman, Hillside Work Scholarship Coordinator at Wegmans.

When asked for tips on how to ace a job interview, Ms. Wegman shared the following:

"You want to make sure you're familiar with the job you're applying for—watch somebody do that job and make sure you understand what the job is going to be so there are no surprises. Also be work-ready; make sure you have all your proper documents and dress professionally for the interview. Be ready to answer the questions and know why you want to work there. And then be ready for the commitment—a job is a big obligation."

Other important things to keep in mind for success at work: "Know that you have to be prepared for the unexpected—at Wegmans our schedules change all the time—and wear comfortable shoes! Standing up for 8 hours a day is no joke."

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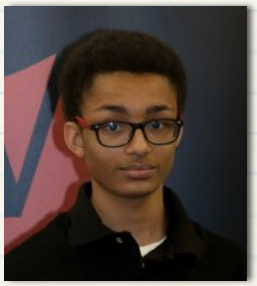
VERTUS SCHOLARS AND MEN OF THE MONTH

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!

Darin Waters
August 2015

Man of the Month



Ricky Bogan
ELA

Daniel Schranck
Social Studies

Jamell Fedrick
Math

Darin Waters
Science

August 2015 Scholars

Antonio Rucinski
September 2015

Man of the Month

Lee Cooper
ELA

Nathan Kimbrough
Social Studies

Eric Cornwall
Math

Nelson Joaquin
Science

September 2015 Scholars

Asa Vines
October 2015

Man of the Month

Luis Diaz
ELA

Immanuel Mackie
Social Studies

Charles Ruffin
Math

Giovonni Cintron
Science

October 2015 Scholars

CHARACTER AWARDS
OCTOBER & NOVEMBER 2015

Adonis Garcia
Grit x 2, Social Intelligence

Alejandro DeJesus
Grit x 2, Social Intelligence x 2

Alexis Perez
Grit

Anthony Perez
Zest

Antonio Rucinski
Brother's Keeper

Azaveya Rucker
Curiosity, Optimism

Blerim Ilazi
Curiosity

Braijon Scott
Social Intelligence

Brandon Purdie
Gratitude

Carlos Gonzalez
Grit

Cashious Thompson
Grit x 2

Cedric Mitchell
Grit, Zest

Charles Ruffin
Grit

Christian McClain
Brother's Keeper, Optimism

Christopher Hunter
Brother's Keeper

Corey Brown
Self-Control, Social Intelligence x 2

D'Kari Gayle
Brother's Keeper, Self-Control x 2

Dajuan Bennett
Grit, Self-Control

Daniel Schranck
Brother's Keeper

Darius Golden
Self-Control, Zest

David Francis
Brother's Keeper x 2

David Gayle
Grit

Dennis Beard
Brother's Keeper, Zest

Desmond Brown
Grit, Optimism

Donta Badura
Gratitude

Drahai Newport-Beasley
Brother's Keeper x 2, Grit

Eh'vion Douglass
Grit x 4

Elliott Jerry
Social Intelligence

Eric Cornwall
Grit x 2

Frederick Holiday
Optimism

Giovonni Cintron
Brother's Keeper

Hamza Hussein
Grit x 2

Immanuel Mackie
Brother's Keeper x 2

Isaiah Ficklin
Brother's Keeper x 3, Self-Control

Isaiah Hester
Grit

Issiac Martinez
Brother's Keeper, Grit

Jadon McCloud
Grit, Optimism

Jaekwon Chisolm
Optimism

Jahvier Lewis
Gratitude

Jaihlen Brown
Self-Control x 2

Jakeith Mosley
Zest

Jamell Fedrick
Self-Control

Jason Haywood
Grit

Jayden Berry
Zest

Je'Taime Bardques
Grit

Jeremiah Gonzalez
Grit x 2

Jermaine Williams
Grit x 3

Jevon Henry
Grit, Zest

Johnel Ravenell
Grit, Self-Control

Jon'Dale Patterson
Social Intelligence

Jorge Luis Baez
Grit

Jose Delgado
Brother's Keeper x 2

Justin Hampton
Brother's Keeper, Social Intelligence

Justin McGill
Self-Control

Kaspar Bennett
Grit

Keith Bryant
Grit

Kishad Griner
Optimism, Zest

Lee Cooper
Brother's Keeper

Luis Diaz
Brother's Keeper, Optimism x 2

Marcher Spencer
Zest

Marcus Bolling
Grit

Marcus Karns
Grit

Marquis Floyd-Stanley
Optimism

Mekhi Jackson
Social Intelligence

Michael Williams
Self-Control, Social Intelligence x 2

Miguel Miranda
Brother's Keeper

Mishawn Holloway
Curiosity, Self-Control, Zest

Morris Robinson
Grit

Myles Rose
Grit x 2

Nahcer Scott
Grit, Social Intelligence, Self-Control

Nasir Hicks
Grit

Nayshawn Smith
Brother's Keeper

Nelson Joaquin
Optimism, Self-Control

Omar McBride
Grit

Paijon Sheppard
Self-Control

Pedro Berrios
Brother's Keeper

Ricky Bogan
Self-Control

Roberto Denizard
Brother's Keeper, Curiosity

Rodrek Johnson
Grit

Selavantez Bennett-Yawn
Brother's Keeper x 2

Semaj Wilson
Grit x 2, Zest

Seth Ramos
Brother's Keeper

Shandan Jones
Self-Control

Shiquil Shipmon
Grit

Sincere Lane
Grit

Torrence Nelson
Brother's Keeper, Grit

Troy Cooper
Self-Control, Zest Optimism

Victor Crespo
Brother's Keeper, Self-Control

Yahzeed Howard
Brother's Keeper

Photo Album: Vertus Blazer Ceremony

Saturday, November 14, 2015

Naomi Geier and Shiquil Shipmon.

Cory Johnson, Leigh McGuigan, Omar McBride, and Naomi Geier.

Mom Jessica Vargas and Benny Rodriguez.

Justin McGill and grandmother Darlene Warren.

Mom Samantha Johnson and Myles Rose.

Justin Bray and Cory Johnson with blazer recipients.

VARSITY AND JV BASKETBALL

Basketball has taught me teamwork and "student first, athlete second"—so student-athlete.

—Isaiah Ficklin

Even when the team gets in trouble, we still help out each other doing our workouts that the coach has us do. We gotta work as a team.

—Stephon Augustin

When I start losing, I get mad, and Coach taught me to break that habit of mind, so he's helping me with a lot of things and this team is helping me form brotherhoods. I like this basketball team a lot.

—Omar McBride

Basketball taught me how to get along with each other and respect each other.

—Isiah Gill

Varsity back row, left to right: Coach Darren Franklin, Myles Rose, Stephon Augustin, Jaekwon Chisolm, Davion Terry, and D'Kari Gayle. Middle row: Lee Cooper, Isiah Gill, Isaiah Ficklin, and Isaiah Hester. Front row: Tajhmere Grice and Omar McBride. Not pictured: Rayshawn Brumfield and Savon Scott.

JV back row, left to right: Coach Jemel Baxter, David MaCartney, Immanuel Mackie, Semaj Wilson, Nayshawn Smith, and Manager Jason Haywood. Middle row: Justin McGill, Cedric Mitchell, Marquis Floyd-Stanley, and Desmond Brown. Front row: Seth Ramos and Jose Delgado. Not pictured: Nasir Hicks, De'Andre Hunter, and Isaac Jasper.

It's taught me a lot about teamwork because if you don't got teamwork, you can't really get through nothing.

—Semaj Wilson

I've learned how to work with a team and make the best of situations that get thrown at you.

—Immanuel Mackie

It taught me how to work well with my teammates. Even though we lost a few games, we still managed to come back and play hard and not give up.

—Justin McGill

I learned how to be a good sport, how to show good sportsmanship, how to be a leader and just play hard.

—Nasir Hicks

About Vertus

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

About Our Newsletter

This newsletter is brought to you by Naomi Geier, Communications and Enrichment Coordinator. Please contact Ms. Geier at 646.483.9548 or ngeier@vertusschool.org with any questions or feedback.

OUR CO-FOUNDERS: Mr. Perry White, Director of External Affairs, and Dr. Leigh McGuigan, CEO.