



Welcome, Vertus Families!

We are delighted to welcome our new and returning families to the 2015-16 school year. Please read below for important back-to-school updates and announcements.

Vertus Family Organization: Family Members Wanted

Vertus is pleased to announce the formation of the Vertus Family Organization. We know that the parents and guardians of our students have a great deal to offer our school and we welcome your support. If you are interested in participating, please call Perry White at (585) 747-8911.

New Families: Welcome!

This year, Vertus welcomes 69 incoming students from many schools around Rochester, including School #9 and Urban Choice Charter School. Our new students have already made a positive impact on our culture with their humor, intelligence, and enthusiasm. We are honored to work with them and their families as the new school year gets going!

Save the Date:

Parent-Teacher Conferences for Second-Year Students

Wednesday, October 21

5:00 pm – 7:00 pm

Teams Bray, Kadar, Daniels, and Woods

Thursday, October 22

5:00 pm – 7:00 pm

Teams Ferguson, Duesler, Peavy, and Mandell

Teachers will review Progress Reports and update families on their students' academic progress, including NWEA MAP test scores. **Our schoolwide goal is 100% family attendance.** Please contact your student's Preceptor with any questions.

Volunteering at Vertus

Interested in becoming a volunteer literacy or math tutor, accompanying students on field trips, or just spending time in the building with our Vertus men? Vertus welcomes family members and friends as volunteers throughout the year. If you are interested, please contact Naomi Geier, Communications and Enrichment Coordinator, at (585) 481-4499.

Questions or Concerns?

Whenever you have a question or concern about anything related to Vertus, your student's Preceptor is your first contact. If you are unable to reach a Preceptor or need to speak to an administrator, call the office at (585) 747-8911 and ask to leave a message for Cory Johnson, our Dean of Students, or Dr. Leigh McGuigan, our CEO.

The Buffalo Bills Attendance Challenge: Skybox Tickets for Five Lucky Students

Regular attendance at school is absolutely crucial to academic success. The research is clear: frequent absences result in lower grades, lower performance on standardized tests, and an increased likelihood of dropping out of high school. In response to this, Vertus presents the Buffalo Bills Attendance Challenge, in which students with the highest rates of on-time attendance this fall earn the opportunity to win a very special prize.

Thanks to the generosity of Dutch Summers, local businessman and friend of Vertus, we are able to offer five students tickets to watch the Buffalo Bills play the Miami Dolphins on Sunday, November 8, at 1:00 pm. These tickets, however, are no ordinary tickets; the seats are in a private indoor suite, or "skybox," and come with catered food and unparalleled views of the field.

How do we choose which five students get to go? That's where things get interesting:

- If you never miss school, never come late, and never leave early between now and October 30, your name goes into the hat 3 times.

SEATS IN THE SKYBOX



Five students will win tickets to watch the Buffalo Bills in an indoor skybox suite with catered food and excellent views of the field, not to mention protection from the chilly Buffalo weather in November!

- If you miss school, come late, or leave early 1 time, your name goes into the hat 2 times.
- If you miss school, come late, or leave early 2 times, your name goes into the hat 1 time.
- If you miss school, come late, or leave early 3 times, you no longer qualify for the drawing.
- Excused absences count as absences.

We wish all of our students good luck and good attendance!

CAREER CORNER

Vertus Welcomes Andrea Bertucci, Full-Time Career Program Manager

Every good career high school needs a good Career Program Manager, and Vertus is very pleased to welcome Andrea Bertucci to our staff. Her main responsibility is to develop the career pathways that will lead to each student graduating with a career credential and an individual success plan for college and/or a living-wage job.

Ms. Bertucci brings over a decade of career readiness experience to her role at Vertus. She worked with Youth Opportunity Boston (now Youth Options Unlimited) for eight

years and developed a career readiness curriculum used by schools and community-based organizations across Massachusetts. Here in the Rochester area, she most recently supervised the ATS program at Greece Arcadia Middle School before joining the staff at Vertus in September.

Ms. Bertucci is an alumna of Our Lady of Mercy High School, John Carroll University, and Northeastern University. When she's not at school, she likes to read, bake, go to the gym, spend time with her friends and family, and travel. "I love the career focus of Vertus," she says. "I'm very happy to be here and excited for the work."

We look forward to our students' benefitting from Ms. Bertucci's expertise and care!





Vertus Charter School

COURAGE, LEADERSHIP, RESPONSIBILITY

In Their Own Words: New Students on the First Month of School

"It's a good school. It's good to work at your own pace. You don't have to worry about people tormenting you or calling you dumb because it's all about how well you do, how many credits you earn, and how well you can lead."

— Jorge Baez

"Good programs, good lunch."

— Pedro Berrios

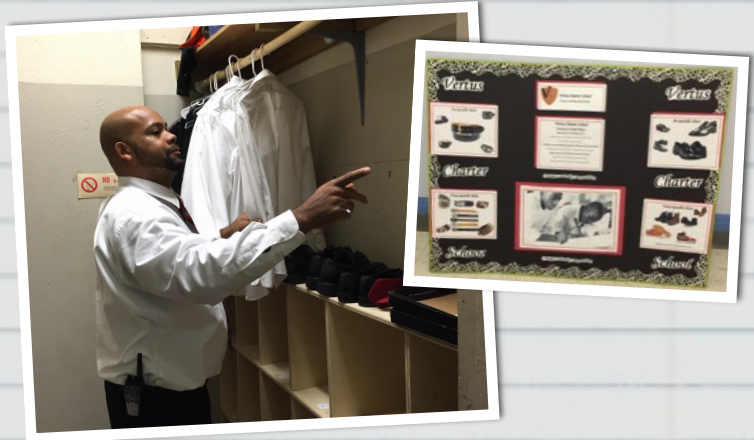
"It was fun meeting new kids that will be my friends."

— Donovan Greenaway

"The first month of school is going good for me because we work at our own pace and we don't gotta rush to do things."

— Nathan Kimbrough

FROM OUR STUDENTS



The Uniform Closet: Mr. Carter's Domain

If a Vertus man happens to come to school without a piece of his uniform, his first stop is The Uniform Closet, where Dean Joe Carter lends out uniform pieces and points students toward uniform perfection.

Former Preceptor Cory Johnson is Our New Dean of Students

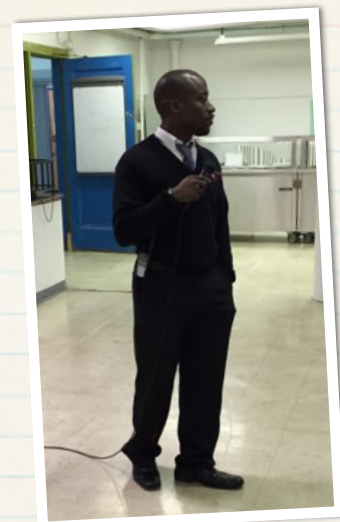
by Omar McBride

...

Mr. Johnson is not a Dean that is so stiff and always mean; no, Mr. Johnson is a chill, fun, and respectful person. He helps everyone feel more comfortable with one another. He can have fun and also be serious. He talks to us as if we were his children, with love and kindness.

Mr. Johnson is very likable to the students in Vertus because he has a very relatable background. He is a great example for us because he has been through a lot of stuff and seen a lot of people that he grew up with waste their life away, and he just tells us every chance he gets: "Don't waste your life away to the streets and drugs because that will not get you anywhere."

So I am glad that Mr. Johnson is the Dean of Vertus. He makes all the people and also the school better.



Cory Johnson leads Morning Meeting.

Hands-On Learning: An Exciting New Roster of Activities for Fall 2015

10 activities, 17 Vertus staff members, and 9 external partners—it takes a lot to keep Vertus' Hands-On Learning program running smoothly, but it's well worth it! These activities take place Monday through Thursday, 3:48 to 4:28, and meet every other day (students go to TSE for Physical Education on the other two days of the week).

The goal of our Hands-On Learning program is to provide our young men with opportunities to do creative hands-on work, which allows them to develop new skills and explore their interests while also having some good old-fashioned fun. Read below for more on each of our fall activities.

Cooking

This new course is wildly popular with Vertus students and is co-taught by a small village of excellent instructors. Teacher Tina Harrity runs the show with assistance from Career Program Manager Andrea Bertucci, Counselor Betsy MacKinnon, and Cornell Cooperative Extension's Michelle



Cooking student Azaveya Rucker concentrates on his pancakes.

Weiler. Themed weeks so far have included breakfast, Italian, and Latino recipes; the group looks forward to a pie week at Thanksgiving, a cookie week at Christmas, and much more.

3D Printing

Taught by Preceptor Jamaal Peavy with assistance from MCC student Peregrine Hawthorne and RIT student Elizabeth Talamo, this new course builds on the work done this summer by our e-NABLE students, who used Vertus' three new 3D printers to make prosthetic hands for children. The 3D Printing elective looks forward to designing and producing many printed items, including more prosthetic hands, for fun and potential profit.

Art

Preceptor James Daniels leads this classic activity four days a week, teaching students the fundamentals of sketching, critiquing, wood-block printing, and sneaker-painting, among many other activities. Art builds students' capacities for self-expression and creativity while also providing a communal atmosphere in which to grow and learn from one another's work. The Art students look forward to field trips to the Memorial Art Gallery and possibly also the Corning Museum of Glass this fall.

Technical Performance Systems

This new class, run by confirmed gearhead Preceptors Gary Mandell and Keniel Ferguson, teaches students the basics of engine design and operation,

automotive maintenance, and general mechanics. So far, students have disassembled lawnmowers, changed the tires on their instructors' cars, learned the principles of horsepower and torque, and put together working engine models. They look forward to getting their hands on an actual car engine in the near future.



Miguel Miranda takes apart an old lawnmower to study its engine in Technical Performance Systems.

Game Design

Co-taught by game designer Jenn Kotler and Preceptor Justin Bray, Game Design returns to Vertus this fall with a new focus on student creativity. Students play assorted games to learn the principles of game design, build the skills needed to develop games, and eventually design games of their own and pitch them to a panel of experts. Rochester is an up-and-coming center for game design, thanks largely to the presence of the MAGIC Center at RIT, and our students will also play-test games for local firm Second Avenue Learning this fall.



Vertus Chess students, coached by Dave Campbell, contemplate their next moves.

Chess

Taught by veteran chess player Dave Campbell of the Rochester Chess Center, this classic Hands-On Learning activity is popular with students who want to begin to master one of the most popular and difficult games in human history. Learning the moves each piece can make is fairly simple, but the strategies involved in beating an opponent are complicated enough to yield a lifetime of enjoyable study. Whether learning the basics of an endgame or discovering which opening moves allow the greatest control over a board, our students are engaged from start to finish in their Chess sessions.

Improv Theater

Local performer Chaz Bruce, instructor with the New York Institute of Dance Education, makes this class a rowdy, fun-loving, and productive good time whenever he walks into the room. From down the hall, Vertus students can be heard singing, chanting, and playing a wide variety of theater improvisation

games, all of which build both individual self-confidence and teamwork. Students who participate in improv theater programs learn to think on their feet in front of a crowd and to cooperate with others on the fly, which are invaluable skills in any walk of life.

Photography

The third time's the charm for teacher Mark Broz, leader of this Hands-On Learning activity, who has two previous attempts at starting a Vertus Photography club under his belt. This fall, an enthusiastic group of new students has kept the energy going and Preceptor Ben Kadar has also helped everyone to learn the ropes. On Tuesdays and Thursdays,



Adeosun Hughes, Charles Ruffin, guest instructor Toshman Powell, Keith Lane, and Isaac Jasper get ready to perform a scene.

Vertus students can be seen all over the building and throughout the neighborhood, taking pictures of everyday objects from new and interesting perspectives, learning the basics of composition and form, and proudly displaying their images for critique on Mr. Broz's projector. We look forward to adding a Vertus photo gallery to our hallways and website.

Marketing and Social Media

This new Hands-On Learning activity, led by entrepreneur Jill Stolt with assistance from videographer Justin Ortiz, is a slight variation on last year's WellVentions after-school program.

This year, we've brought WellVentions into the school day and given it a new focus: teaching how to market products through effective use of social media, YouTube, and other 21st century platforms. Optional sales events on weekends make this the only Hands-On Learning activity in which participants can earn a bit of money!

Robotics

After a successful first year of working with Lego Mindstorm products, Robotics is back and better than ever with a new mission: students are readying themselves to compete in the international FIRST Robotics competition under the guidance of veteran engineer Linda Maulding and teacher Matt Rollins. FIRST Robotics sets parameters for what a robot must be able to do and limitations on what materials can be used; student teams from all around the world compete for who can use their resources most effectively and creatively. Our students are preparing by learning some of the basics of robot mechanics and design this fall.



Linda Maulding and Matt Rollins present Robotics to a group of interested students.

Three New Staff Members in a New Role: Lab Managers at Vertus Charter School

At the start of our second academic year, Vertus created and introduced an entirely new staff position. For the first time, Vertus is home to three Lab Managers, each of whom is assigned to one of our three Learning Labs, where our students do the bulk of their academic work on Edgenuity using desktop and laptop computers.



Patrick D'Ambrosio is a lifelong Rochesterian who grew up in Gates and most recently taught in a credit recovery program at Greece Athena High School. "I like the fact that I can have one-on-one conversations with students regarding their academic needs so that I can best help them to move forward," says Mr. D'Ambrosio. "I'm looking forward to an awesome year."

So what exactly does a Lab Manager do? "Our Lab Managers are really important because they help us manage the most important thing here, which is learning," says Dr. Leigh McGuigan, CEO of Vertus. "They assist students with their tests and quizzes, they help them take notes, they keep order in the lab, and they're part of the learning team along with our teachers."

"They have the ultimate control over their Learning Labs," adds Fran Schenk, Lead Teacher and Academic Coordinator. "Lab Managers get students into the lab and seated in their assigned seats, they maintain discipline, and they also help reset quizzes or open tests if needed. I think it's better to have one centralized person in charge of each Lab, and it gives the teachers more time to help students with academic questions."

Each of our three Lab Managers—Patrick D'Ambrosio, Richard Maez, and Calvin Nicholson—also fulfills at least one additional role at Vertus. Mr. D'Ambrosio teaches one of our Freedom Writers sections, Mr. Maez is our new Physical Education teacher, and Mr. Nicholson looks forward to coaching basketball this season.

We are very fortunate to have three talented and committed Lab Managers on board. Next time you're in the building, stop by a Learning Lab and greet one of these three intrepid educators!

Originally from Gilbert, AZ, **Richard Maez** is new to the Rochester area, having moved here to be closer to his girlfriend's family. He looks forward to his first Rochester winter and is excited to try curling once the snow flies! "I like working with the kids on a different way of learning," says Mr. Maez. "The competitiveness of the students is really fun."



Calvin Nicholson has lived in Albany and Syracuse, but he's called Rochester home for the past 14 years. Before coming to Vertus, he worked in membership sales at a fitness center and also ran (and still runs) a basketball training company. "I like that the kids are actually learning in a model that's built for them and their learning styles. In my lab, I try to make it all about competition."

Vertus Welcomes Two New Interns from SUNY Brockport!

In a continuation of our summer literacy tutoring program, we are delighted to have two new SUNY Brockport interns in residence this fall, **Beth O'Donnell** and

Laura Gallagher. Both are certified teachers working toward a special literacy certification under the supervision of Brockport adjunct instructor K. Sue Geier. If you are at Vertus on a Tuesday or Thursday afternoon and see either of these ladies in the hall, stop and say hello!





Vertus Charter School

COURAGE, LEADERSHIP, RESPONSIBILITY

STUDENT AWARDS

SEPTEMBER 2015

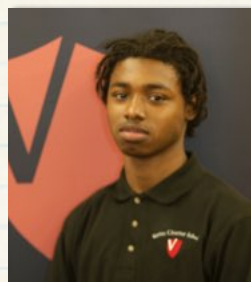
Grit	Optimism	Self-Control	Curiosity	Brother's Keeper
Angel Ayuso	Rayshawn Brumfield	Jorge Baez	Jeremiah Flemming	Je'Taime Bardques
Jayden Berry	Jose Delgado	Kasper Bennett	Marquis Floyd-	Selavantez Bennett-
Rushaine Blake	Luis Diaz	Jaekwon Chisolm	Stanley	Yawn
Giovonni Cintron	Isaiah Hester	Troy Cooper	Donovan Jackson	Lee Cooper
Miguel Colon	Nasir Hicks	Adonis Garcia	Jermaine Williams	David Gayle
Troy Cooper	Donta Hodrus	Ahkil Hargrove		Nelson Joaquin
Eric Cornwall	Mishawn Holloway	Nasir Hicks	Social Intelligence	Omar McBride
Luis Diaz	Issiace Martinez	Mishawn Holloway	Keith Bryant	Christian McClain
Isiah Gill	Azaveya Rucker	Christopher Hunter	Roberto Denizard	Jadon McCloud
Ja'Chae Holley		Laray Miller	Alexis Perez	Eric Porter
Mishawn Holloway	Zest	Miguel Miranda	Eric Porter	Antonio Rucinski
Torrent Nelson	Roberto Denizard	Jon'Dale Patterson	Myles Rose	Daniel Schranck
Alexis Perez	Anttwon VanHorn	John Porch	Nahcer Scott	Nahcer Scott
Jacolby Sermons	Tamar Greer	Jacolby Sermons		
Marcher Spencer		Shiquil Shipmon		
Asa Vines		Davion Terry		
Darin Waters				
Semaj Wilson				

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!



Jackwon Chisolm
July 2015



Quincy Clayton
ELA



Lee Cooper
Social Studies



Jackwon Chisolm
Math



Antonio Rucinski
Science

Man of the Month

July 2015 Scholars

SUMMER COMMUNITY SERVICE

One of the lines in the Vertus creed, which students recite every morning, is "We are role models in our community." During our summer session, Vertus students exemplified this value by participating in community service projects around Rochester, guided by their Preceptors and supported by one another. Lead Preceptor Shane Duesler shares about the experience in a Q&A with Naomi Geier, Communications and Enrichment Coordinator.

Ms. Geier: So what should we know about this summer's community service projects?

Mr. Duesler: I would say that is was probably one of the most rewarding experiences, for the students as well as the staff, of this summer. To actually see them going out and learning something and then beginning to invest in the community was really great.



Omar McBride, Carey Blocker, Isaiah Ficklin, Cedric Mitchell, Desmond Brown, and Nicholas Shabazz hard at work at The Vineyard.

Ms. Geier: What did the learning teams do to prepare for the trips?

Mr. Duesler: They learned the mission of the places before they went, saw what they did as far as the community was concerned, and had an idea of what they would be doing to give back to the community. Once they got there, they had an orientation, got more specific instructions, and did their actual work. The weeks we didn't go, we reflected on what we did the week before.

Ms. Geier: And students also did presentations for Morning Meeting to show the other teams and staff what they had done—I thought those were really great. What do you think makes community service so beneficial?

Mr. Duesler: It teaches students that it's more than just themselves, you know, how important the community is, especially considering the current state of affairs in Rochester. There isn't a strong sense of community, so for them to be able to get out there and give back and do for the community, I think it's important.



Darin Waters and Jadon McCloud wield rakes at The Vineyard.

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, with a special contribution from Vertus student Omar McBride. Please contact Ms. Geier at 585.481.4499 or ngeier@vertusschool.org with any questions or feedback.



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