



The Vertus Voice

Spring 2020

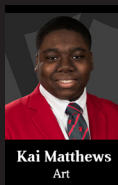
Vertus Charter High School • 21 Humboldt St., Rochester NY, 14609 • (585) 747-8911



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Vertus' 5th Annual Red Blazer Ceremony

On Saturday, November 23rd we celebrated our 5th annual Red Blazer Ceremony. The Vertus blazer declares that you are now an official part of the Vertus family. It is a symbol of trust; and the first step in accepting the Vertus way and committing to the process needed to transform our young men into leaders of character. Looking across the stage and seeing a sea of smiling young men dressed in red, it could be hard to see what they had to overcome to be invited to this event. This process is intentionally challenging, and it can be difficult for some of our students.

This year, 33 of our young men received their red blazer. As our young men put on their blazers for the first time, in the presence of family and friends, with the guidance of their Preceptors, it sent a message that they are now part of a new community - the Vertus community. From here, a vanguard of men pour into the next generation. This community believes in integrity, spirit, academic mastery, and self-control. We believe in attendance and that progress is a process. Our young men come from many different parts of the city, social, economic, and academic backgrounds, and what our community believes may be drastically different than that of the communities they come from. Nevertheless, with trust, time, and hard work we can achieve great things. This is the first step whereby the freshmen of Vertus High School become part of our community and our newest brothers; in essence, it is a rite of passage for our Vertus men.

Convocation and opening prayer was given by Mr. Shawn Yarbrough and the song "Lift Every Voice and Sing" was performed by Mr. Samuel Oliver; both are Preceptors here at Vertus. Christopher Washington, owner of Top Flight World, was our guest speaker. His motivational approach to life was the basis of his speech, telling our young men that they can fulfill their dreams with hard work and dedication.

After the ceremony, there was a dessert reception in the cafeteria and our resident photographer Alex Pouliot set

up a photo booth for our families to take pictures to remind them of this very special celebration. Congratulations to all the red blazer recipients!



a message from the PRINCIPAL



January Regents Exams are done, the first semester is over, and we are several weeks into the second semester. The first half of the year went by so quickly in a blur of academic and social-emotional successes. We had a record number of students earn new ties in the first half of the school year. We award ties as a symbol of academic achievement when students reach predetermined milestones. Over ninety-six students met those milestones and earned red, striped, or professional ties. We also recognized student achievement in our monthly ceremonies for Scholars of the Month and Man of the Month. Pictures of all winners, past and present, hang in our main hallway as special recognition.

Social-emotional success is measured through examples of character growth. As a school community, we celebrate in the moment when we see students exhibit examples of our character strengths: Grit, Social Intelligence, Self-Control, Curiosity, Optimism, Gratitude and Zest. These character traits are taught and discussed in student seminar and we look to our young men to live them day to day.

During intersession week, the entire student body participated in a variety of community service projects. These opportunities to give back to the community are an expression of gratitude and a chance for our young men to serve others in need. All of these efforts are just a small example of how we are continuously working towards our mission of, "Developing Leaders of Character." If we can achieve this in one short semester, imagine our students' success and growth over four years.

Warmly,
Ms. Locey

from Counseling

Spring is just around the corner, which means that the school counseling office is busy working with our seniors. We are finishing college applications and setting up plans for success! Many of our students are looking into joining the military, and to help us build on knowledge of connecting students to the military, Ms. Flanagan joined the Marines for a special education training session. She attended boot camp and learned about the transition from high school to the military.

Springtime is a busy time for our third years as well. They will be attending the NACAC National College Fair in March. This is a nationwide college fair, where students will be able to meet with admissions counselors from across the country. Our focus will shift to college and career planning as we move forward with this group.

We are happy to report that our partnership with Monroe Community College has remained strong as a number of students are enrolled in the spring semester and will be earning college credit. In continuing our strides to build college and career connections with our students, we brought Vertus families and local businesses together at our Family Conference Night Job/College/Military Fair. Our department is ready for sun, and we look forward to watching our young men cross the stage in June!

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upcoming EVENTS



Our 4th annual College Classic 3 on 3 Basketball Tournament Fundraiser will be held on March 28th in our gym, keep an eye on our Facebook page for more details!

Our Spring Red Blazer Ceremony is scheduled for Friday, April 17 in the gymnasium, more details to follow.



We're working on another Open House Community Event in June, which will be combined with a fundraiser for the #OSTRONG Scholarship Fund. Follow us on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram to stay up to date on this and other upcoming events!

Seniors

March 12th starts
the **one hundred day** countdown to GRADUATION!



We will celebrate in the cafeteria with a breakfast catered by James Brown's Place for our graduating seniors.

Vertus Cafeteria

Tuesday, June 9th  4pm - 6pm

HIGH SCHOOL
SENIOR BANQUET

This gives our graduates one last chance to break bread with their peers.

Seniors Honoring
Significant Women
In Their Lives

BRUNCH

Vertus Cafeteria
Thursday, May 7th
9:30am - 10:45am



Graduation practice is Monday, June 22nd at 2pm.
It is MANDATORY that all graduates attend.

 *Save the Date* 

Graduation
June 23rd, 2020

6:30 pm at the Auditorium Theater on East Main St.

Each graduating senior will be allocated 10 guest tickets and announcements.
Fittings for graduation caps and gowns will begin the last week of February.
More details for graduation will follow.

in SPORTS



Winter Sports:

Basketball recap from Coach Franklin:

The team this season has been the most mature team in the short history of Vertus' basketball program. This group of young men truly have a hunger to compete and improve their respective game. The team started the season off to a 4 - 1 start (first in Vertus basketball history), however several players were struck with the "injury bug." The next 10 games were a great learning experience as each player was asked to take on additional responsibilities for the betterment of the team. Currently, the team is in the homestretch of the season with the goal of finishing the regular season strong. The six seniors on the team have truly demonstrated by their actions, and elevated the standard for each player, by performing in the classroom and being accountable on the court every day. We will miss the seniors, but understand each player will always have a place in the Vertus basketball brotherhood.



Indoor Track recap from Coach Abron:

Vertus had an amazing indoor track season. The team started off by breaking all the school records at the first track meet at Houghton College, and continued to establish records throughout the season. Isaiah Cotton-Aikens broke the records for the 55 meter dash, 300 meter dash, and the 600 meter run. In addition, he established the school long jump record with 16 ft. Jadiel De Jesus, a new member to the team, was a contributor on breaking the school record in the 4x200 meter relay and the 4x400 meter relay. Trevon Howard was also a member of the school record 4x200 meter relay breaking team, as well as the 4x400 meter relay. Tyzier Washington established the school record in the 600 meter run, but it was soon broken by Isaiah Cotton-Aikens. Tyzier is also part of the school record breaking 4x400 meter relay and the 4x200 relay. Daniel Kalumbwe and Nicholas Findley-Wolff are both new members of the indoor track team and have improved in all of their events at every meet. Daniel was part of the school record breaking 4x400 at his first ever meet. Jamar Jones was a returning member of the indoor team from last year. He improved in both of his events, the 55 meter dash and 300 meter dash, by a large margin since the previous year. He was also part of breaking the 4x200 school record this year twice before it was broken again. Rahmeir Westbrook established both the shot put and weight throw school records. He has already qualified for sectionals as a 9th grader. He continues to break his personal record meet after meet. The Vertus indoor track team will be participating in the Section V Sectionals February 22nd at RIT from 12 pm – 5 pm.

Please visit <https://vertus.rschooteams.com/> for up to date information on all athletic dates and times.

The Vertus athletic department is proud to announce the grand opening of our official online sideline store! Please visit http://sideline.bsnsports.com/schools/new_york/eastrochester/vertus-high-school for your Vertus athletic apparel!



monthly AWARDS

November

Man of the Month



Niles Ragland-Bennett
November 2019

Team of the Month



Team Alpert
November 2019

Vertus		Scholars
Kerry Frasier ELA	Brysten Hardgers-Powell Social Studies	Treyvon Brown Math
Jassiah Mosley Science	Tyrin Hill Spanish	Ja'Vari Ford Art
November		2019

December

Man of the Month



Jarel Dixon
December 2019

Team of the Month



Team Banks & Team Fogle
December 2019

Vertus		Scholars
Rashadd Walker ELA	Marco Gonzales Social Studies	Marco Gonzales Math
Xalen Lucas Science	Trevon Howard Spanish	Kai Matthews Art
December		2019

January

Man of the Month



Damier Webb
January 2020

Team of the Month



Team Oliver
January 2020

Vertus		Scholars
Cameron Douglass ELA	Christian Shaw Social Studies	Josaph McClure Math
DeVon Davis Science	Zafir Brinkley Spanish	Kai Matthews Art
January		2020

Man of the Month
Exemplifies the virtues and he is nominated by his team, and the finalist is chosen by school leaders.

The Team of the Month
Chosen by school leaders based on attendance, academic progress, and contributions to school culture.

Vertus Scholars
One student per core subject chosen by the department; they exemplify grit in pursuit of academic excellence.

in the COMMUNITY



Open House

In the month of February, Vertus held its winter Open House Community Event, where staff, students, families, and community members united for a day of fun. As always, the 3 on 3 basketball tournament drew large crowds. For the individuals who didn't compete, there was a variety of other captivating activities to engage in. There were free haircuts provided by More Than a Haircut barbershop, owned by Joe Gentile. In another area of the building Vertus hosted an epic video game room, which drew a crowd of its own. In addition to the fun, there was a delicious lunch prepared by Darrell's Kitchen. Chef Darrell prepared fried chicken, baked mac & cheese, baked beans, and dirty rice. Needless to say, the community event attendees ate well! There was also a great presence of community organizations such as GoodSchoolsRoc.org, Youth Voice, One Vision (YVOV), City of Rochester's Biz Kids, The North Winton Village Association, Fidelis Care, MVP, Army, Marines, Navy, and Air Force. As a school, we cherish these valued moments that we share with the community.



Radio Show

Every Saturday at 2pm, Vertus runs a live radio show on 100.9FM WXIR, titled The Vertus Way: From Boys to Men. Vertus' own Michael James, Josiah Holloway, and Tyzier Washington lead it. In March of 2020, the show celebrated its one year anniversary. Throughout this year, our students have done a tremendous job representing our school and our families. They have engaged in meaningful conversations and conducted many successful interviews. They bravely spoke on challenging topics such as depression, gun violence, racial injustice, and more. Due to their hard work, the show earned honors and received a radio production award!



Men's Gallantry

Vertus hosted the Men's Gallantry roundtable event, established by community leader/Pastor Ken Sayres, where men come together in a roundtable discussion and confide in one another. This environment provides men with a safe place to be vulnerable with one another. Various community leaders sat on a panel and shared meaningful conversations with our students on the topic of the



Impact of Strong men in the Community. This event was co-facilitated by Vertus' own Chris Sumner and Uprep's Kala Gause. Both men did a great job representing their schools.





community SERVICE

WE ARE RESPONSIBLE

We keep our promises

We work hard to accomplish our goals

We help our families, friends, and community

We respect and care for women

WE ARE LEADERS

**FOLLOW
US ON
TWITTER**



@HighVertus

This is the second stanza from our creed; every morning our students recite this powerful and positive affirmation loudly during our morning meeting. Our students have big hearts, and during intersession week they put these words into action. Our students and small learning teams are engaged in numerous community service projects throughout the year, and especially during intersession week Vertus as a school dedicates time and resources to be of service to our community.

Our mission, to prepare leaders of character for the community and workplace, is paramount to the Vertus vision. We believe that engaging in community service is important to the character development of a young man. As today's world gets smaller and smaller due to social media it has become easy to turn a blind eye to those in need. Engaging in community service provides students with the opportunity to become active members of their community and has a lasting, positive impact on the Rochester society at large. Community service or volunteerism enables students to acquire life skills and knowledge, create lifelong memories, and provide a service to those who need it most. It helps our students develop a trait all leaders need, empathy.

Vertus students volunteered at Foodlink where every year more than 10,000 volunteers donate their time and talents to help provide support for thousands of low-income and food-insecure residents. Volunteers are essential at all levels of Foodlink's operations, from sorting and packaging donated food to assisting with their numerous food-related programs. Vertus' seniors, understanding the vision of this Rochester staple and the importance of this work, jumped right in to help.



Vertus students also organized and hosted our 3rd annual blood drive. Giving blood is a simple thing to do, but organizing a blood drive and inviting the people of Rochester to give is not so simple. This event was organized, led, and marketed by our students; they met with representatives from the Red Cross, learned about the importance of giving blood, and



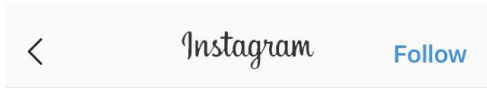
reached out to the community. This year's blood drive was a major success with more than 40 people donating blood.

Vertus students are also partnering with Mr. Waswa Samuel (he goes by the name Waswa), the Director of Operations at a non-profit organization which runs Kingdom Junior School and Child Care Center in Bombo, Uganda. Kingdom Junior School teaches a variety of subjects to about 170 children ages 5-14. Many of Waswa's students rely on him for their main meal each day (lunch), as breakfast and dinner are often not guaranteed at home. We have followed Was-

wa for some time now; he genuinely cares for his students as if they were his own children, and asks for modest support to secure lunch for his students, scholastic materials, clothing, and school fees. Eighty dollars is enough to feed the entire school for one week. Funds are consistently low, and he does not often have the resources to provide the nutritional quality that he would like to. Vertus students have written letters introducing themselves to the Kingdom Junior School students and are currently brainstorming fundraising ideas for the school.

Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. said, "Everybody can be great...because anybody can serve. You don't have to have a college degree to serve. You don't have to make your subject and verb agree to serve. You only need a heart full of grace. A soul generated by love." I don't think we could have put it any better than that.

STUDENT SPOTLIGHTS



rocpaintdivision
Rochester, New York



4th year student, **Kai Matthews**, was recently hired by the city of Rochester's Roc Paint Division as a youth artist/muralist.



Josiah Holloway and Tyzier Washington received the 2019 Radio Show Production Award; they currently host weekly live FM Radio show *The Vertus Way: From Boys to Men*. This show airs live every Saturday at 2pm on 100.9FM WXIR.



Arlo Rollock was elected as the president of SOAR Youth Leadership Team. This team works to reduce the rates of STI, HIV/AIDS, and unplanned pregnancies among youth in Rochester.

Find the 8 Differences in the 2 Photos



4th year Preceptors: Rashaun Fogle, Norris Woods, and Aaron Banks

APPLY NOW!

School choice is YOUR choice!
Apply online at vertusschool.org

We are currently accepting applications for the 2020-2021 school year. For more information contact Senior Recruiter, Michael James
Email: mjames@vertusschool.org Phone: (585) 481-4503

FOLLOW US ON 
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"Great school for young boys entering high school. The staff here encourage and uplift these young men. My oldest two sons attend and they enjoy it and I have seen a lot of improvement in them!"
- Parent of 2 Vertus Students