



The Vertus Voice

Spring 2021

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

Brother's Keepers Community Cupboard

When the Pandemic hit, we knew we would want to rally around our students and families and help them in any way possible. We soon realized that one of the Pandemic ramifications would be job loss and tightening family budgets, particularly with all the children home from school. It became apparent that one of the ways we could help that would have the most impact is providing food to those families experiencing food insecurity.

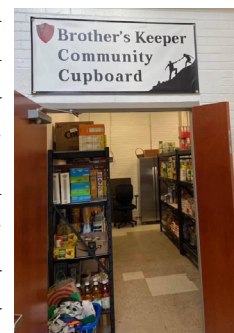
One of our first food box drives took place with our staff. Based on Vertus staff's generosity and some support from their circle of influence, we were able to pack up and deliver food to over seventy families during those first few months.

As months passed and the lockdown continued, the need steadily increased. While we had so much support from the community, our Board, and staff, we knew that we had to start thinking about a long-term solution. It was then that plans for a permanent food pantry within the building began. We researched permanent space and a continuous supply stream, and we maintained a makeshift pantry in an unused classroom while we were fully remote.

Through staff member Scott Rogerson's connections to Perinton Food Pantry, a partnership was founded that allowed Vertus to pick up nonperishable items every month to fill our food shelf here at Vertus. This partnership continues today and has generated a reliable monthly supply for our pantry. With these donations and The Father's House outreach, we provided 35 families with Thanksgiving dinner boxes and 65 families with Christmas dinner boxes outside of our regular food support to between 23 families weekly.

Well into the fall and in collaboration with LeFrois Construction, we were able to settle on a spot and plan for our permanent pantry. LeFrois Construction generously donated the labor to refit a room and run electricity to make it usable. After fitting it with shelving and storage, another generous donation allowed us to purchase a refrigerator-freezer which enables us to store perishable items as well.

We officially opened our fully stocked "Brother's Keepers Community Cupboard" in mid-February. To date, we have been blessed to receive nonperishable donations from Perinton Food Pantry, St. Rita School in Webster, Julian's Dry Cleaners on Blossom Rd, and cash donations from members of our local community. As we look forward, our anticipated endeavors include planting and growing our own garden and incorporating learning about sustainable living into the student curriculum. As a year-round school, students can help weed, tend, harvest the vegetables, and then take them home to their families. We are thankful that we have the opportunity and support that enables us to give back to our Vertus family and to build relationships with other community partners.



DMV



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Counseling
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Community
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LEFROIS
BUILDERS & DEVELOPERS

PERINTON
FOOD SHELF



THE FATHER'S HOUSE

Julian's
DRY CLEANERS

a message from the PRINCIPAL



It has been one year since education, as we knew it, changed dramatically. The COVID-19 pandemic resulted in shifts in how we did almost everything, but in this instance, completely redefined school. Instead of being a building students reported to, school became a part of each student's home. Vertus was in the unique position to send students home to learn with minimal disruption. Thankfully, our young men continued their education without missing a beat, thanks to the blended learning program and proper planning. The staff's dedication kept the students connected, and most importantly, we were able to return to our school building using a hybrid model in September.

School has not been the only arena impacted by the pandemic. There have been many challenges faced throughout this past year for our families, community, and nation. At Vertus, we work together to ensure that we can help our students work through any obstacle. Our commitment to building strong relationships helps create an environment where students feel comfortable discussing what they are experiencing and how they think and feel about what is going on in the world. Racial injustice, community upheaval, and other topics are not brushed off or avoided. These are topics our young men need to talk through and process. We used many platforms to hold these discussions during the pandemic, including zoom team meetings while we were remote and morning meetings and team circles when we could return to school.

Coming together as a school community to foster positive student growth is our main goal. The distance between us during the pandemic could not change that. Thankfully, we are slowly returning to "normal," so we begin planning a return to school full time. Our plan's focus will be the continued safety of all of our community, but we cannot minimize the disruption that this pandemic has been for many of our students. Physically returning to school will allow us to do what we do best, educating our students.

I look forward to the day when all of our young men come back into the building. While the transition to our remote program was smooth, nothing can replace in-person interactions between students and their preceptors and teachers. I am confident that together with the staff, students and families will make this transition back to school as smooth as the move to remote learning.

upcoming EVENTS



- Senior Banquet (Date yet to be decided)



from COUNSELING

Career and College Center

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US ON
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@HighVertus

The Career and College Center serves the needs of students, alumni, and their families with college and career planning. Our goal is to provide students with the resources, tools, and guidance necessary to chart a path towards their life and career goals.

We have numerous resources on college preparation and selection, careers, SAT and ACT test preparation, scholarships, financial aid, college entrance essay writing, and job acquisition documents. We also have computers available for student and alumni use.

C&CC Team



Norris Woods Jr.
Program Coordinator



Geno Allport
Alumni Coordinator



Andrew Colon
Wegmans Liaison



Jillian Flanagan
School Counselor



Jennifer LeFrois
School Counselor

Drivers Ed Program

We can now assist students through the entire process of getting their driver's license. Students can sign up to be a part of this program that starts with taking the permit test through taking the road test. Our team members are proctors for the driver's permit test, and students can take the test right here at school!



Our open-door policy welcomes all of our alumni and students to stop by the Career & College Center to utilize the resources available and plan for the future.



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in SPORTS



Winter Sports Recap

Both the basketball and indoor track & field seasons were in jeopardy from the start. We were lucky enough to be able to compete and participate in condensed seasons for both basketball and indoor track & field. All student-athletes were excited for the opportunity to compete.

Basketball

The shortened basketball season consisted of 11 regular-season games (typically a 20 game season,) for the varsity team. Sectionals were closed this season, which means only the top 8 teams were awarded a spot to compete in the Sectionals tournament at the end of the season. Coach Franklin's varsity team finished the regular season with a 6-5 record and the #6 spot in the class B1 Sectionals tournament. The team was lead by Senior guard Quanmay Early who averaged 18.2 points/game, 8.6 rebounds/



game, and 1.9 steals per game, and Senior point guard Rashawn Williams who averaged 17.4 points/game, 5.6 rebounds/game, and 2.2 steals/game. We thank each of our 7 seniors who contributed over the past few years. You will be missed! Each of you has a place in the Vertus basketball brotherhood!



Senior Basketball Players:

Jason Davis ♦ Quanmay Early ♦ Brandon Everett ♦ Marcus Hogan ♦ Izarie Knight ♦ Nishawn Lockhart ♦ Rashawn Williams

Indoor Track & Field

The condensed indoor track & field season consisted of 5 track meets followed by a closed Sectionals meet each held at the Pinnacle Athletic Campus in Victor, NY. This was a first for Section V indoor track & field. The shortened season did not affect how Coach Johnson and the Vertus High School indoor track & field team prepared. Our team was lead by Senior Isaiah Cotton-Aikens who qualified for Sectionals in the 55M and 300M. Rahmeir Westbrooks also qualified for Sectionals for the shot put event. Rahmeir holds the Vertus High School record for the shot put.

Spring Sports Start April 19th

We offer the following Spring sports-

- **JV Baseball for 1st through 3rd Years** - Tryouts schedule- Monday 4/19 3:30-5:00, Tuesday 4/20 & Wednesday 4/21 3:30-5:00 in the Vertus Gym or Genesee Valley Park Diamond #4 (if weather permits)
- **Varsity Outdoor Track & Field for All Years** - Practice will start Monday, April 19th from 4:00-5:30 at Vertus or Franklin High School (if weather permits)

Student-athletes who wish to participate in any athletic programs at Vertus High School are expected to get re-qualified prior to each sports season they participate in. Requalification requirements can be found on our website.

To find out more about a particular sport or the sports qualification process, please contact our Athletic Director Rich Maez 480-241-3071 or rmaez@vertusschool.org

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



monthly AWARDS

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.

Man of the Month



Daniel Kalumbwe
October 2020

Man of the Month



Izaiah Wade
November 2020

Man of the Month



Cherokee Hardman
January 2021

Team of the Month



October 2020

Team of the Month

Brothers Keeper For Life (BK4L)



November 2020

Team of the Month



January 2021

Vertus	Scholars
Jakory Ashe ELA	Jayshawn Jennings Social Studies
Aristide Gui Spanish	Elijah Corchado Math
David Quinones Science	Myron Dancy Art
Nasir Newsome Athlete	

October 2020

Vertus	Scholars
Demencio Houston ELA	Manuel Pagan Social Studies
Anthony Sostre Spanish	Jael Duran Math
Mattias Shaw Science	Jaheem Anderson Art
Izaiah Wade Athlete	

November 2020

Vertus	Scholars
Markus Williams-Ricks ELA	Malachi Davis Social Studies
Samaj Borns Science	Nasir Newsome Math
Zacariah Randall Athlete	James Searight Spanish
	Devon Wade Art

December 2020

Vertus	Scholars
Christian Marshmon ELA	Dakari Wallace Social Studies
Trevor Scott Science	Emanuel Griffin Math
	Tyrin Hill Spanish
	Jamal Brown Art
	Isaiah Cotton-Aikens Athlete

January 2021

Staff Member of the Month



Geno Allport
Preceptor

This staff member operates on a daily basis by going above and beyond for all the students at Vertus. He ensures that his team is on track and making progress and then moves to other students in the building to get them on track. This hard work does not stop in the 4 walls of the school. He reaches out to all of our alumni to help them get jobs, driving permits, interview prep, apply for trade school, and anything that would help them navigate successfully through adulthood. He is an excellent example of the work ethic and character that we want our students to embody.

As a new member of the Special Education Department, his students excel because he always goes above and beyond. They not only have 90% attendance during a pandemic but completed over 300

tests and quizzes for the 3 weeks in February. He also helps out students that are not on his caseload with anything they may need, from delivering guided notes and food to assisting students with any work they may have. As the new voice of Vertus, he hypes up both players and spectators of the basketball games to gain energy bringing Vertus to many wins. He even researches the other teams so that he can make informed calls.

Staff Member of the Month



Andre Johnson
Preceptor

in ACADEMICS



Learning Through a Pandemic

It has been just over a full calendar year since the COVID-19 pandemic changed how we live. Over this period of time, the school has transformed into something we never imagined. Synchronous learning, asynchronous learning, Zoom, remote learning, hybrid school, Google Classroom, social distancing, and “PPE” are just a small example of some of the strategies and tools we have used while educating our students in the past year. Meeting our students’ needs is always a top priority at Vertus, and being flexible and proactive throughout the pandemic has allowed us to continue to do so.



As a blended learning school, Vertus was in a unique position to seamlessly provide our students with a remote learning program when the school closed its doors. Edgenuity is the online learning platform that our students use on a daily basis as part of their academic program. Teachers worked to customize Edgenuity courses in order to provide them with their full selection of courses. With flexibility being the key, the academic model took on a number of different iterations throughout this process, from being

fully remote to reopening in a hybrid model and currently offering the opportunity for students to be in the building four days a week. With this came the necessity to schedule live-virtual classes over Zoom as well as provide PowerPoints, lectures, and other activities for students to complete asynchronously. Teachers, preceptors, deans, SPED, and AIS worked together to communicate with students, ensure they were engaged, drop off notes, and even met them for support outside of the school building when necessary! None of this could have been done without the dedication of our staff and the strong relationships they have with our students. Whatever the next chapter of the COVID-19 pandemic looks like, our staff will be ready to face it!



Music Production - Music is being made at Vertus!



This program seeks to expand the students’ horizons as far as musical taste and exposure while honoring the need for reciprocity. Students are provided hands-on experience with the technology in order to gain a first-hand understanding of the cutting-edge innovations that exist in the Music Recording realm. They are learning to demonstrate how technology can be used to aid in the recording and presentation of acoustic instruments as well as how electronic music can be produced or recorded.

Students are also learning how to manipulate music by creating medley mixes, music re-arranging, and exploring the digital world of music while learning the basic concepts of making beats and music patterns to be used in music production.



At the end of each year, students will have the opportunity to submit their best work to be released on the Vertus Compilation Record. This body of work will culminate every unit, demonstrating that students have learned the key elements presented in class.

Students will also be a part of the process of releasing the music on all the different streaming platforms. This way, they can leave this class understanding how to continue their work in the music industry if they choose to do so.

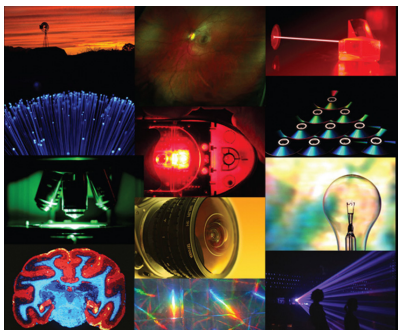


in ACADEMICS continued

Communication Skills

February marked the start of the second semester and the kick-off of Shaq Payne's "Communication Skills" class. The class focuses on breaking down communication mechanics, teaches students how to utilize these mechanics, and then ultimately apply these mechanics in real life. The course is broken up into units. The first was "Interviews." Students spent four weeks learning about questions asked on interviews, how to dress and why you dress up for an interview, body language, resumes, and their "Elevator Pitch." All of these skills culminated in their unit final, which was mock interviews. The goal of the final was not just about passing but seeing how putting these things into practice can increase their chances of getting a job or at least a call-back. Payne's communication skills class aims to teach through engaging and innovative methods effectively.

Introduction to Optics



Introduction to Optics is an MCC dual certification class that gives students three credits for college and a half-credit towards graduating from Vertus. It introduces students to the area of Optics and Photonics, which is a branch of Science and Engineering. This class may count towards a college credit for a degree in the Optics field or towards an elective if the student chooses not to pursue a career in optics. The Fingers Lake region is a hub for a career in optics with more than 120 companies. MCC is the only college in the entire world that offers an associate degree in Precision Optics with a 100% job guarantee. U of R and RIT offers BS, MS, and Ph.D. in the field of optics. Vertus is among 12

Barbering

Recently Vertus has launched its barbering program. This course gives students insight into the world of barbering. In this class, students will receive hands-on learning under a master barber. At the end of this program, students will apprentice and test for their barbering license.



Construction

Through this program, students will receive a hands-on learning experience. This project-based course will focus on construction skills such as electrical, plumbing, drywall, framing, and painting. Once this course is completed, students will work on their OSHA 10 training, with an opportunity for certification.

in the COMMUNITY

Divine 9 (D9)

In Celebration of Black History month, Vertus hosted its first-ever Divine 9 (D9) day on February 26! The National Pan-Hellenic Council is a collaborative organization composed of historically African -American Greek-lettered fraternities and sororities. Students got a chance to meet over thirty men and women to hear their story about Greek Life and how it also has helped them professionally. It was a joyous day for both our visitors and students.



Spot the six differences between the two photos:



STAFF SPOTLIGHT

In Memory of Jason Trzeciak



Chief Operations Officer
& Vertus Man
11/9/2015 - 11/11/2020
Gone But Never Forgotten

This past November, the Vertus family suffered a significant loss when our COO, fellow Vertusonian, and friend, Jason Trzeciak, passed away. Jason had been with Vertus for five years; he started as an accounting contractor, and through his GRIT and determination, worked his way up to the Chief Operating Officer, a title he was very proud of. Jason worked behind the scenes at Vertus, but those who met him at Vertus, or out in the community, knew right away how much he loved Vertus and believed in our mission. As Jason worked his way up, he became a part of the Leadership Team; a group of staff committed to continually improving Vertus to ensure we are the best we can be for our students. Even though Jason is no longer with us, his memory lives on in his ideas, achievements, and everyone that knew him here at Vertus.

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APPLY NOW!

Applications are being accepted for the 2021-22 school year. Apply online at vertusschool.org or call our Senior Recruiter, Michael James, (585) 481-4503

