

# RAPPAHANNOCK COUNTY SCHOOLS PANTHER PRIDE NEWSLETTER

DR. DONNA MATTHEWS, SUPERINTENDENT

## HEALTHY MINDS AND BODIES

### RCPS Commit to be Fit

During the 2015-16 school year, RCPS implemented a healthy living and learning focus.

As part of this focus, RCPS teachers and administrators joined the Mental Health Foundation of Fauquier County; whereby, all RCPS staff were trained in mental health first aid, solidifying the first step to overall school health for employees and students. In fact, RCPS became the first school division to train all staff!

Following this successful venture, a team was formed to develop the *Commit to be Fit* \$100,000 grant application under the purview of the PATH foundation. The division was approved for this grant award in August 2016. The vision of this grant initiative is to improve the overall climate of health and wellness in school staff and students— nutritionally, physically, and mentally. With the overarching goal that of inspiring students and staff to make healthier food choices and understand the importance of becoming physically fit, the grant team developed a plan for the *Commit to be Fit* challenge. This plan included two main focuses and the involvement of the school family and the community.



The first focus of the grant is conducting an analysis of the school lunch program through consultation with a licensed nutritionist in order to provide tastier, healthier lunch menu options. The second focus is to work with teachers to incorporate fun, classroom-friendly kinesthetic techniques, promoting movement and fitness. As part of this focus, health and wellness sessions will be offered for students, parents, community members and the school

## ENRICHMENT OPPORTUNITY

**Attention juniors:** Virginia Aerospace Science and Technology Scholars (VASTS) is an interactive online learning course with a space mission design and human space flight theme, culminating in a one-week residential Summer Academy at NASA Langley Research Center in Hampton for those students who qualify. Offered at **no cost** to the student, VASTS consists of eight modules and a final project to be completed from **November 2016 through May 2017** under the guidance of licensed master educators. Based on success in the online coursework, students may be selected to attend a Summer Academy where they interact with NASA scientists, engineers and technologists to design a human mission to Mars. **Students who successfully participate in VASTS can apply to earn 2 college credits for the online course and 2 additional credits for the Summer Academy.**

**The deadline for student applications is October 30th, 2016.** For more information on this program, please contact:

Ian Cawthray VASTS Ed. Program  
Coordinator:

[ian.m.cawthray@nasa.gov](mailto:ian.m.cawthray@nasa.gov).

Or visit: <http://vast.spacegrant.org>



family. Our staff will integrate additional health-related objectives into the division's curriculum. In keeping with the grant goal, the division has recently filled three part time positions which were written in the grant: a nutrition specialist and two integration specialists.

To kick off the program, the *Commit to be Fit* planning team will have sign up stations offered on Saturday, September 24th, at Rappahannock County High School's fall festival. With recent awarding of the grant, Director of Food Services, Mrs. Stacey Whitt, will serve the division in the capacity of project administrator. RCPS is looking forward to providing tastier more nutritious foods and a healthier platform for students to become nutritionally, physically, and mentally fit. So mark your calendar to come by the fall festival and sign up for *Commit to be Fit*! Registration for the Commit to be Fit Challenge is open to all Rappahannock County community members, parents, and staff, ages 21 and older. Please join us in our six month journey this year to become healthier individuals together.



#### **Meet the Commit to be Fit (#C2BF) Team:**

Left to right: Grant writer/researcher, Shannon Grimsley; PE Teacher & C2BF Wellness Integration Coordinator, Jackie Tederick; Wellness Integration Specialist, Jacqueline Lowe-Barton; Wellness Integration Specialist, Holly Jenkins; Food Service Director/Grant Administrator, Stacey Whitt; and Nutritionist, Amanda Grove.

**Did you know?** The Virginia Department of Education has awarded Rappahannock County Public Schools a total of \$28,816 from the 2016 School Security Equipment Grant Program authorized by the 2013 General Assembly. These funds will be used to continue the safety and facility plans providing a more secure environment for our students. Congratulations to RCPS!

## SPECIAL EDUCATION

### CHILD FIND

The Departments of Special Education and Section 504 are tasked to maintain a Child Find program to identify, locate, and evaluate children in Rappahannock County who may be in need of special education or Section 504 services. Based on the premise that all persons, ages 2-21, are entitled to a free appropriate education and access to the curriculum, the Child Find Program of RCPS provides services to support the early detection of disabilities in accordance with federal regulations at no cost to parents. Key offerings include developmental screenings for preschoolers, ages 2-5, and screenings for concerns pertaining to speech language, body coordination, cognitive abilities, vision and hearing, as well as self- help skills and are available to any local students who are suspected of having a disability. The process is not intended merely as a prerequisite to special services; the process should assist in providing alternatives and interventions within the regular education setting. To find out more about the Child Find Program or to request an appointment, please contact Carol Johnson at 540-227-0023 or email at [cjohnson@rappahannockschools.us](mailto:cjohnson@rappahannockschools.us).





## THE KINDLES ARE ON FIRE

### RCES Implementing Kindles and Imagine Learning

The new Kindles in Mrs. Todd's Title I class are up and running. Students are enjoying the use of technology to learn literacy skills through Imagine Learning. Through videos, games, songs, and animations students are motivated and engaged in learning. In the primary grade levels, students are learning to identify and write letters and recognize letter sounds. They are using sight words, digraphs, and blends when learning to read words. In the upper elementary grade levels, students are building comprehension and reading skills, such as drawing conclusions, making inferences, comparing and contrasting texts, and building vocabulary. Upon successful completion of reading skills, students can earn coins to spend in a virtual store.



Teachers in grade levels kindergarten through seventh are engaging students in learning in new ways to make learning fun while meeting the individual needs of each child through systematic instruction. Each student's progress is monitored so teachers are able to determine specific skills to focus on when remediating students.

Parents have been provided an instructional flyer from their child's reading teacher explaining how to access Imagine Learning at home using a computer or tablet. Students can pick up right where they left off whether at home or at school.



## COMMUNITY SUPPORT

### Lion's Club Members Visit RCES for Pedia Vision

On Tuesday, September 20, six members of the Rappahannock and Madison Lion's Club visited RCES with a special camera in hand. Children in Pre-K, Head Start and kindergarten participated in a vision screening known as PediaVision. In less than two hours, more than 80 students were screened.

PediaVision utilizes an infrared camera that combines auto-refraction and video-retinoscopy. In just a few seconds the camera takes a digital photograph of the child's eye from about 3 feet away. The image is acquired and automatically assesses the child's vision. From the child's perspective, they are just smiling for the camera. While the Lion's Club has faithfully conducted vision and hearing screenings over the years for our kindergarteners, third and fifth graders as well as students new to our school, this is the first year that Rappahannock County Elementary School has participated in this type of screening designed for our youngest students. We thank the Rappahannock Lion's Club for arranging this screening. A special thank you to Lion's Club members Larry Grove, Suzanne Long, Jack Malone, Jim Blubaugh, Kathleen Johnson, & Bill Nenninger for volunteering their time.



## RCHS FIELD EXPERIENCE AT BLANDY

### Student Scientists Explore the Community

On September 19<sup>th</sup>, RCHS Science teacher Dave Naser's Chemistry class attended a field trip to the Blandy Experimental Farm, home of the Virginia State Arboretum in Clarke County.



In a day filled with hands on science learning activities, students participated in Meaningful Watershed Educational Experiences (MWEE) in order to learn more about how scientists investigate water quality in the region's rivers and streams. Applying classroom learning to the real world, students were shown how chemistry is used in lab tests, including both high tech and low tech instruments. Water samples from the Shenandoah River were tested for temperature, PH, Phosphates, Nitrates, and Turbidity. The use of Litmus strips, calculation sheets, colorimeters, and turbidity tubes was demonstrated, with students being taught how to measure each of the traits to assess overall water quality.

The afternoon featured a switch from focusing on chemical tests to calculating water quality based on macroinvertebrate analysis. Gaining more hands on experiences, students were able to catch, sort, and categorize macroinvertebrates from samples of the Shenandoah River. After determining which types were most prevalent they were then able to conclude about the overall pollutant level in the water.

Tying in other science topics, students were also able to walk around the property at Blandy to view the amazingly diverse ecosystems at work, including standing upon the rocks in a dried ephemeral pond, Lake Georgette. The educational leaders at Blandy explained that the rock formations were evidence of plate tectonic movement during the late Neoproterozoic and early Paleozoic eras, approximately 600 million years ago.

By the end of the day, in addition to having an amazing learning experience at Blandy Farm, RCHS students discovered ways to make a difference in their community by focusing on the the very important issue of water quality. This is a topic very near and dear to Rappahannock County given its location at the headwaters that lead to the Chesapeake Bay.

On September 29<sup>th</sup> RCHS life sciences teacher Mrs. Waddell will bring her Horticulture class to Blandy Farm to extend students' knowledge of the plant sciences and allow additional RCHS students to benefit from the hands-on learning experiences. Farm to Table coordinator and environmental scientist, Sarah Moore, will be accompanying the students to assist the students in exploration and add another dimension of field expertise.





## Upcoming Events and Announcements

- ❖ September 24<sup>th</sup>: RCHS Fall Festival 11:00 AM – 5:00 PM
- ❖ September 29<sup>th</sup>: Fall Picture Day at RCES
- ❖ October 1<sup>st</sup>: MVGS Chili Cook-off at Fauquier High School
- ❖ October 4<sup>th</sup>: Effects of Heroin Documentary at RCHS 6:00 PM-8:00 PM
- ❖ October 6<sup>th</sup>: Commit to be Fit Wellness Day 8:00 AM-12:00 PM
- ❖ October 6<sup>th</sup>: Parent Teacher Conferences 1:00-4:00 PM & 5:00-7:00 PM
- ❖ October 17<sup>th</sup> -21<sup>st</sup>: Homecoming Week

### RCPS Vision

#### Statement:

*To empower every student to reach his or her full potential.*

**Oct. 11<sup>th</sup>:** School board meeting at 6:00 PM with public comment on the new RCPS Comprehensive Plan beginning at 6:30 PM. The Comprehensive Plan helps define the division and student focus for the next six years. Thank you to all who participated in the writing of this document!

For upcoming athletic events visit the RCPS Sports Page: <http://rappahannockcountyhs.rschooteams.com/>



\*\*\*The *Commit to be Fit Challenge* sign-ups will begin on **September 24<sup>th</sup>**. Come to the Fall Festival at RCHS on that day to learn more, sign up, and enter to win some great prizes! There will also be a Wellness Day event on **October 6<sup>th</sup>, from 8:00 AM-12:00 PM** before parent teacher conferences. Come to a workshop, see nutrition demonstrations, catch a fitness class, and sign up for the challenge. The first 150 people who attend and sign up receive a free gift valued at \$60! Registration is open to all Rappahannock County community members, parents, and staff, ages 21 and older. Please join us on our journey to become healthier individuals. For questions about the program requirements, or to sign-up for the FREE program, please contact Jackie Tederick [jtederick@rappahannockschoools.us](mailto:jtederick@rappahannockschoools.us).