



THE VILLAGE BLUEBIRD

SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER 2013

VOLUME 11, ISSUE 1

SUMMER GREETINGS!

Dear Village School Families,

We hope that you have enjoyed the summer months with friends and loved ones and are as excited about the start of a new school year as our team is.

During the summer months, groups of teachers participated in a variety of professional development workshops designed to support our curricular programs and further build their repertoire of assessment, teaching and learning strategies. In the coming months, you will learn more about our partnership with *Columbia University's Teachers College Reading and Writing Project*, our new *Math in Focus* resource and the wonderful learning experiences your children will have this year.

The Montgomery Elementary School PTA, led by co-presidents, Mr. Greg Swerdlow and Mrs. Minkou Chenette, has a variety of engaging events scheduled throughout the year and invite you to get involved. For more information please review the enclosed letter on pages 6 and 7.

On opening day, our staff and PTA volunteers will help guide students to their classrooms in the morning and to their buses during dismissal. A special thanks to the PTA for generously providing color coded maps at each entrance and balloons that will help students navigate the building with ease!

Village School continues to take great pride in building character and will highlight a different pillar of character each month. We will begin the school year by celebrating *Responsibility!* To further promote these pillars, fourth graders may choose to volunteer as Peer Partners who also facilitate school-wide service projects or as VES Morning News announcers on our live daily broadcast.

This school year is certain to be a fantastic one. We look forward to celebrating learning with you!

Look for our next issue in November!

Ms. Susan Lacy, Principal

Mr. Alfred Hadinger, Vice Principal

Village School Hours

Regular Day 9:30-3:50

Early Dismissal 9:30-1:30 (Parent pick up begins at 1:15)

Emergency Delayed Opening 11:30-3:50 (Student drop off 11:20-11:30)

Back-to-School and Parent Book Fair Nights

3rd Grade - Monday, September 16th, 7 p.m.

4th Grade - Tuesday, September 17th, 7 p.m.

Related Arts/Community Fair at 6:30 p.m.

This night is for parents and guardians only. We invite you to learn about VES programs and attend an important presentation by the classroom teacher. Be sure to visit the media center for the Scholastic Book Fair!

IMPORTANT DATES:

- Sept. 6: First Day of School
- Sept. 13-20: Scholastic Book Fair
- Sept. 16: 3rd Grade Back to School Night & Book Fair Parent Night 7:00
- Sept. 17: 4th Grade Back to School Night & Book Fair Parent Night 7:00
- Sept. 17-18: School Picture Days
- Sept. 19 PTA Meeting 9:45 (VES)
- Oct. 7-11: Week of Respect
- Oct. 14: Staff Development, schools closed
- Oct. 15-18: Food Allergy Awareness Week
- Oct. 17: PTA meeting 9:45 (OHES)
- Oct. 18: 4th Grade Bingo 4-5 p.m.
- Oct. 25: 3rd Grade Bingo 4-5 p.m.
- Oct. 31: Halloween Readers' Theater & Parties
- Nov. 7-8: NJEA Convention, Schools Closed
- Nov 15: Dad's Night Out 6 p.m.
- Nov. 21: PTA Meeting 9:45 (VES)
- Nov. 21, 22, 25, 26: Parent Teacher Conferences, 1:30 Early Dismissal
- Nov. 22: Family Carnival, MHS, 6 p.m.
- Nov. 27: 1:30 Early Dismissal
- Nov. 28-29: Thanksgiving, Schools Closed
- Dec. 5: VES Fall Chorus Concert 7 p.m.

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Our pillar of character for
September is *Responsibility!*
In October it's *Respect!*

New Additions To Our Village School Family!



Ms. Amy Monaco, K-4 Language Arts/Social Studies Supervisor

Mrs. Miriam Gordon, School Psychologist

Ms. Jillian Chianese, 4th Grade ICS

Ms. Samantaha Borelli, 4th Grade ICS.

Mrs. Melissa Sandler, Special Education

Ms. Anne Palmisano, Special Education

Ms. Casey Maxwell, Special Education

Mrs. Tiffany Page, 3rd Grade

Mr. Evangelos Malakates, 3rd Grade

Ms. Lindsay Camarda, 3rd Grade

Ms. Kelsey Borup, 3rd Grade

Mrs. Virginia Alexander, 4th Grade ICS

Ms. Michelle Barbarasch, Academic Support

Ms. Monica Noda-Olszyk, Occupational Therapy

Mrs. Heather McCarthy, Guidance Counselor K-4

Mrs. Maria Larkin, Spanish

Mrs. Kathleen Carroll, TIA

Mrs. Angela D'Agostino, TIA

Mrs. RoseMarie D'Allegro, TIA

Ms. Megan Grover, TIA

Ms. Heather Moran, TIA

Ms. Heather Thompson, TIA

We also welcome student teachers from the Music Department of Rutgers University and the Elementary Education Department of The College of New Jersey.

Guidance Offerings from Mrs. Fornal and Mrs. McCarthy

Guidance Offerings from Mrs. Fornal and Mrs. McCarthy

Hello! We are excited to begin the school year! This year, we welcome Heather McCarthy to the counseling staff. Mrs. McCarthy earned her Bachelor's degree in Psychology from Vassar College and a Master's degree in Counseling from The University of Pennsylvania. She then worked as a K-8 School Counselor in Philadelphia School District. As a former student, Mrs. McCarthy is thrilled to return to Montgomery Township Schools. This year, she will be providing services to students at Village and Orchard Hill Elementary Schools.

We are pleased to offer individual and small group counseling to students who would benefit from additional support. Parents and teachers may refer students when they feel a child needs a safe place to go to express their thoughts, feelings, and concerns. The first group of the year, the Newcomers Club, will be held during the first few weeks of school to assist new students with their transition into Montgomery Township Schools. The students will be given the opportunity to talk to other new students, ask questions about the school, and to participate in activities.

Other groups that will be offered throughout the year focus on helping students with Social Skills, Controlling Emotions, Self-Esteem, Separation/Divorce, Loss, How Your Engine Runs, Organization, Relaxation, and Siblings of Special Needs. These groups will begin in late September or early October. Parents are encouraged to contact us if they feel their children would benefit from any of these groups. Mrs. Fornal can be reached at lfornal@mtsd.us. Mrs. McCarthy can be reached at hmccarthy@mtsd.us. You may also call 609-466-7606 and press 5 for the guidance office.

As the year progresses, we will be providing monthly guidance lessons following the Steps to Respect Anti-Bullying Program and emphasizing the pillars of character. The pillars include: Trustworthiness, Respect, Responsibility, Fairness, Caring, Citizenship, Sportsmanship, Friendship, Honesty, and Leadership. We will also work closely with teachers, administrators, and other faculty to monitor the academic, social, and emotional needs of students to determine the appropriate interventions that can help students reach their full potential. We look forward to a successful year and to working with many students and parents. If you would like to learn more about the guidance programs, please visit our guidance page located on the Village Website.

The History of Blazer, Our Bluebird



Bluebirds were harbingers of spring until their numbers were drastically reduced through use of pesticides along with habitat destruction before the era of environmental awareness. Bluebirds thrive in areas of open farmlands where insects and old woodpecker holes exist. Montgomery offers this type of habitat, especially in the land around Village School, and can be enhanced with the addition of bluebird houses.

Cousins of the robin, Bluebirds have made a comeback through the efforts of people who provide and maintain nesting boxes along bluebird "trails." Several bluebird boxes were installed on VES grounds a few years ago. As a result, bluebirds have become commonplace around VES and in many parts of Montgomery. Students can learn about and observe these quiet, beautiful birds right here on our school grounds while practicing caring and responsibility for our fellow inhabitants.

In April 2006, Village Students voted to name our mascot Blazer the Bluebird and in 2007 they voted for our school motto: Blazer says, "Be Your Best at VES!"

Mr. Hadinger

IMPORTANT SCHOOL DAY PROCEDURES—*PLEASE REVIEW*

ARRIVAL, DISMISSAL, VISITING AND PARKING

- **School Hours:** The school day begins at 9:30 and ends at 3:50.
- **Transportation:** Buses will drop students off and pick them up at the main entrance to VES. Your child's transportation arrangements are available on *Genesis* accessible from the district home page. Delays during the first days of school are normal.
- **Before School Drop Off:** If you need to drive your child to school, you must travel on Spruce Drive and use the **rear** entrance of the school. **This entrance will be open from 9:20 a.m. - 9:30 a.m. Please do not drop your child off early as the doors will be locked until 9:20.** When dropping children off at the rear entrance in the morning, if you stop your vehicle **next** to the school sidewalk, your child may exit by his or her self on that side of your vehicle. However, if your child has to walk across lanes of traffic, you **must** walk him or her to the sidewalk. Please do not drop students off in the front of Village School at any time. After 9:30 a.m., park in our front visitors' lot and **an adult must sign children in at the main office.**
- **After School Pickup:** If you need to pick your child up at the end of the school day, park in the large back lot and enter through the cafeteria doors or park on the right side of the back driveway that is between the school and the traffic island and enter through the main rear entrance doors. **Please do not park on the roadway itself as it creates a traffic hazard.** Students will be dismissed to the cafeteria for parent pick-up at 3:45 p.m. as instruction takes place up until this time. **Parents must sign children out in the cafeteria.** Please send a note to your child's teacher in the morning if you plan on picking up your child in the afternoon or if your child is attending an after school activity. **Without a note, children will be sent to their buses.** Midday and end of day pickup requests can be disruptive to instruction and are difficult to honor as dismissal information is confirmed early in the day.
- **School Day Visits: All parents/visitors arriving between 9:30 and 3:45 must provide photo identification.** After you push the button to buzz in, you **must** give your name and scheduled appointment destination, enter through the front entrance, report to the main office, show identification, sign in and obtain a visitor nametag. During special events, the Spruce Drive/rear entrance hours may be extended. These times will be communicated in advance. Visitors must sign out in the office before leaving the premises.
- **Late or Midday Drop off/Pickup:** If you need to drop off or pickup your child between the hours of 9:30 and 3:45, please park in our visitors' parking lot in the front of VES and use the main front entrance. **Parking is not permitted in the front driveway as it is a bus driveway only.** **After 9:30 a.m., children must be signed in by an adult.** You must submit a request in writing in advance if a late arrival or early pick up is planned. (BOE Policy 5230) **Please sign your child in or out at the main office.**
- **School Day Parking:** Parents/visitors may park in our front visitors' lot, our side lot, or our large lot in the back between 9:30 and 3:45. When parking in the back lot, all visitors will need to walk around VES and enter the front main entrance. **Please do not park on or block roadways.** If you absolutely must park on a roadway, use caution and park on the far right side. **Parking is always prohibited in designated fire zones and in the bus driveway.** Please use caution when parking along the side of the road and driveways. **Always park off the road to the right as far as possible and do not block roadways.**
- **Traffic Flow:** From Main Blvd., turn onto Brophy Circle toward the rear of the school. Bear left, traveling **west** on Spruce Drive or **west** into the driveway. Please maintain a one way traffic flow (counterclockwise) around the school at all times. There are one way signs to serve as reminders. To exit, continue west on Spruce Drive, or left on Schley Road, both will lead you back to Main Blvd.



Facilities Updates and Reminders

This summer, we had several new air conditioning units installed in Village School. They will greatly improve the efficiency and comfort level of our building. New carpeting was installed in the 100 Wing and main office areas, and one third of our classrooms were painted. An important security enhancement was the installation of electronic key fob devices at several exterior doors, including the main entrance. They will enable us to keep all exterior doors locked during the school day while permitting only authorized staff to access the building. Along with the security cameras that were installed last spring, Village School has significantly upgraded our school security.

We want to express our appreciation to our school and district custodial staff for their work getting our schools clean and safe. The director of facilities, Mr. Bob Austin, custodial supervisor Mr. Bruce Fleming and custodians from other schools worked together with Mr. Ken Vaccaro, our VES head custodian, night supervisor Mrs. Debra Newbury, and VES custodians Dan Moore, Hugo Guerrero and Mike Colucci to get all of our schools ready for opening day. Thanks!

IMPORTANT DISTRICT POLICIES

P2260 Affirmative Action
 P2361 Acceptable Use of Computers
 P 5200 Attendance
 P5120 Assignment of Pupils
 P5230 Late Arrival and Early Dismissal
 P5308 Pupil Health Records
 P 5330 Administration of Medication
 P 5331 Management of Life-Threatening Allergies
 P 5350 Pupil Suicide Prevention
 P 5530 Substance Abuse
 P 5512 Harassment, Intimidation and Bullying
 P 5600 Pupil Discipline/Code of Conduct

P 5751 Sexual Harassment
 P7440 Security of School Premises
 P9131 Civility
 P9150 School Visitors


District policy and mandatory regulations can be located on our district web-site at www.mtsd.k12.nj.us. By following the link entitled "Board of Education" and by clicking on the left hand menu entitled "Board of Education Policies", you will be able to access all school policies. For those who do not have access to a computer, copies of the policies are available in the main office of the schools.

Student Attendance Information

Village School students exit buses at 9:20 AM, along with students whose parents choose to drop them off at the rear of the school. This arrival procedure takes about 10 minutes. If you bring your child to school after 9:30 a.m. you must sign him or her in at the office in person. Otherwise, your child may be marked absent. The following are key points of Attendance Policy/Regulation 5200, Tardiness Policy 5240 and Late Arrival and Early Dismissal Policy 5230.

- Students must be in school for 4 hours to be considered present for the day. A child who is in school for less than 4 hours will be marked absent.
- A student absence may be considered an excused absence for the following reasons: NJ State approved religious holidays (N.J.S.A. 18A:36-14), personal illness or medical appointment with health care provider written documentation, family illness or death, court appearance, quarantine or suspension.
- All other absences will be considered unexcused.
- When a student accumulates an excessive number of absences, the school will send a warning notice to his or her parents or guardians.
- All excused and unexcused absences are expected to be verified/communicated by the parent with the school.
- In accordance with Policy 5240 students are expected to be on time to avoid the negative educational consequences associated with tardiness. Tardiness will be excused for illness, emergency in the family, observance of a religious holiday, a death in the family or by administrative directive. A warning letter will be sent home when a student is tardy for an excessive number of days.
- In accordance with Policy 5230, an administrator may excuse the late arrival or early dismissal of a student due to a medical appointment, medical disability or court appearance upon the prior written request of a parent or guardian.

More Helpful Information

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- * **Communicating With Teachers:** The best ways to communicate or set up an appointment with teachers are by sending an email, writing a note, or by leaving a voicemail message.
 - * **Reporting Absences:** Please call the school's main number (609) 466-7606 and press one to help us verify that your child will not be in on that day. Please state your child's name, teacher's name, the date and reason for the absence.
 - * **Lunch Information:** Students may bring lunch from home or purchase a school lunch. Detailed information about the purchasing procedures are attached.
 - * **Snacks:** You may pack a healthy snack and water for your child. Water helps us maintain a clean classroom environment. Snacks may be eaten in the morning for those with a late lunch and in the afternoon for those with an early lunch.
 - * **Backpacks:** While rolling backpacks are popular and convenient items for today's students, please note that these particular backpacks can pose a tripping hazard in our busy hallways and do not fit into students' individual classroom cubbies designed to hold his/her personal belongings during the school day.
 - * **Games/Electronic Devices/Cell Phones:** Due to the risk of loss, damage, and disruption to the learning environment, the use of these items during the school day is strongly discouraged. Students are encouraged to engage in social interactions with their peers during lunch, recess, and on the bus ride to and from school. If games and electronics are brought to school, students will be required to keep them off and in backpacks during instructional time. Cell phones may not be used during school hours.
 - * **Roller Sneakers:** For safety reasons, students are not permitted to wear roller sneakers to school with the wheels installed.



Dear Village School Parents and Guardians

Welcome back! I hope everyone had a great summer. I invite you to review September's lunch menu online at www.mtsd.k12.nj.us. Simply select Orchard Hill Elementary School from the main page and click on "Lunch Menu" to access the menu each month. To help your child know what is for lunch each day, it would be helpful if you could go over the menu the night before. This will help prevent unnecessary tears when children find they don't care for the day's hot lunch selection.

Please ensure that your child has the necessary funds in his/her account. You can check on this daily/weekly by calling the kitchen in the morning to find out the remaining balance or go to our new online site www.payforit.net. At the point that your child has five lunches remaining, the cashier will give your child a friendly reminder. Mrs. Armstrong, my assistant Director, will contact you by phone or email in order to remind you to make a deposit to your child's account. Lunch deposit forms are available on the school website. Children are permitted to buy only two hot lunches on credit. If by chance the funds do not get replenished at this point we will offer a Peanut Butter and Jelly Lunch Bag, or Fun Bagel Lunch Bag until the account is replenished. Students with peanut allergies will be offered a bagel as health alerts are in the computerized system and appear on the screen during check out. You will still be charged for these lunches. Lunch at the elementary schools will cost \$2.20 and milk will cost \$0.55.

To help ensure that children with peanut allergy's are not in jeopardy of cross contamination only pre-made, pre packaged Uncrustables will be served in the kitchen. Our pizza on Fridays is made with a whole wheat crust, and our chicken nuggets and patties are all white meat. Our goal is to nourish our students. With this in mind, we will be rolling out our new Environments Menu adding more fresh fruits and vegetables.

Your child may choose one item from the main menu, i.e. hamburger, salad, Uncrustable or a premade deli sandwich or the hot alternate that will be featured each week. Children may choose a hot or cold vegetable, fresh or cupped fruit, and 1%white, fat free, strawberry or chocolate milk. A complete lunch comes with five components, meat/meat alternate, bread, vegetable, fruit and milk. Each child must select three of the five components in order for us to ring up a complete lunch and not ala carte items.

We will also be selling baked chips, low fat sherbet and fruit or veggie cups for snacks as time permits during the week. Children may purchase one snack a day. The snacks range in price from \$0.25 to \$1.00. Water is not a part of lunch and is offered as an ala carte item for \$1.00. The State of NJ set this rule stating that water has no nutritional value.

We hope this information will help you and your child have a happy, healthy lunch experience. To learn more about Chartwells, visit our website at www.eatlearnlive.com. We're excited about our long partnership with Montgomery Township Schools and hope to provide a great program while becoming part of the Montgomery community.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at 609-466-7602 ext. 6510/6511 or the Village kitchen staff ext 2017.

Patricia Kurczewski
Director of Dining Services
chartwells@mtsd.us

With our computerized debit card system you may choose to pay cash or deposit cash/checks into your child's account! Deposits can be made using our online payment system. Log onto www.payforit.net the screens will guide you through the process to establish your account. Deposits are made available the day the money is received by the staff.

Make checks/money orders payable to Montgomery Board of Education - Cafeteria Account. Please complete the bottom portion of this letter and return with your deposit in an envelope marked "Lunch Program." Though it is preferred that students utilize the debit system, **cash will still be accepted at all registers**. Cashiers will verbally notify children when they have only five prepaid lunches remaining. You will also be contacted by phone or email. Students will be permitted to purchase up to two lunches on credit.

Please detach and return to the cafeteria with your deposit and child's ID # in a sealed envelope marked "LUNCH PROGRAM."

Student's Name: _____ ID# _____ Grade: _____ Teacher's Name: _____

Amount Enclosed: \$ _____ Method of Payment: (check one) _____ Cash _____ Check _____ Money Order



August 2013

Dear VES Families,

Another school year is about to begin and we are so excited to start the year. The MES PTA provides the setting for parents, teachers, principals, and staff to come together and improve the lives of our children through youth programs and activities.

To start, we invite you to join our PTA! Online registration is now available on our website at VESPTA.org or, if you prefer, membership forms will be sent home at the beginning of the school year. There are some great events coming up so mark your calendars and we hope to see you all there. Please check our website for more details, find us on Facebook at "MES PTA", and keep an eye out for the back to school mailing in September!

Finally, we could not do all that we do without the support of all our wonderful volunteers, but we still need more! Please come out and get involved.

Thank you, and we look forward to a GREAT year!

Sincerely,

Greg Swerdlow and Minkou Chenette.

MES PTA Co-Presidents

www.vespta.org

Winter Carnival

Carnival Games, Classroom baskets, teacher auctions, food and entertainment for the whole family!

Save the Date!

November 22nd 6pm

Montgomery High School

MES PTA

Welcome Breakfast

Please join us for coffee, bagels and treats and learn more about the PTA. Children are welcome!

October 2nd

10am

Scholastic Book Fair

September 13 -20

**VES Back To School Nights
Book Fair will be open**

3rd – September 16th

4th – September 17th

VES Spirit Wear on Sale!

BINGO

4th – October 18th

3rd – October 25th

Dad's Night Out

November 15th

Volunteers Needed!

We need volunteers now for the programs listed below, as they will begin in September.

If interested, please email the committee chair listed ASAP. Thank you!

Cafeteria/Recess Helper – Andrea Spuck at adspuck@yahoo.com.

School Pictures – Jignya Patel at jignyapatel@yahoo.com.

Spirit Wear Back To School Sales – Gretchen Lainez at gnlainez@gmail.com

Book Fair – Andrea Cresti at ong70@comcast.net / Sharon Howard at cunyhoward@hotmail.com

Winter Carnival – Christine Zoffinger at cmzoff@aol.com / Christine Petraine at cpetrane@yahoo.com

Dad's Night Out – Sue Sipos at sipos121@yahoo.com

2013-14 STUDENT DIRECTORY

The Student Directory (aka the Friend Finder) is a combined directory for Montgomery Schools. This year we plan to move the directory to be online and expand to include Pre-K through High School. Information on how to register and purchase coming soon so keep a watch for announcements!

Committee Chair people still needed!

Character Education / Week of Respect
New Years Around the World

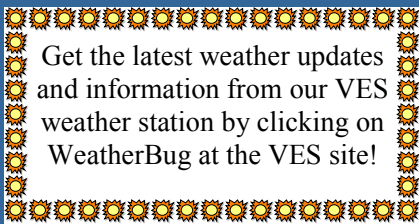
Please email Greg at greg.swerdlow@gmail.com or Minkyoo at minkouchenette@gmail.com if interested.

Village Elementary School
Home of Blazer the Bluebird
100 Main Boulevard
Skillman, NJ 08558



*Blazer says,
"Be Your Best at VES!"*

SUSAN LACY, PRINCIPAL
EMAIL: SLACY@MTSD.K12.NJ.US
ALFRED HADINGER, VICE PRINCIPAL
EMAIL: AHADINGER@MTSD.K12.NJ.US
Phone: 609-466-7606
Fax: 609-466-7196



Get the latest weather updates and information from our VES weather station by clicking on WeatherBug at the VES site!

MONTGOMERY TOWNSHIP SCHOOL DISTRICT MISSION STATEMENT

Our mission as a forward-thinking community is to ensure that students grow into confident, compassionate, and successful learners in a global society by providing engaging and challenging educational experiences in a student-centered environment.

Six Day Rotational Schedule

September	Day
6	1
9	2
10	3
11	4
12	5
13	6
16	1

VES works on a six-day rotational schedule for related arts classes. Your child's teacher will inform you of the class' related arts schedule within the first few days of school. For the entire VES 2012-2013 six-day rotational calendar please visit the VES website at www.mtsd.k12.nj.us.

Health Office Request

Any medications that must be administered to your child during the school day may be brought to the VES nurses, Mrs. Foley or Mrs. Woodard, in the Health Office on September 4th or 5th.

Please visit the district homepage at www.mtsd.k12.nj.us under Headlines for the 2013-2014 School District Calendar!

HAVE YOU UPDATED YOUR CONTACT INFORMATION?

Dear Parents and Guardians,

Montgomery Township School District is working to update our student database system with the most current contact information for parents/guardians.

You should have received e-mails from the district requesting that you update your contact information, which is used for emails and phone notifications. It is important that parents/guardians, on a regular basis, follow the instructions provided to update this information so that you receive notifications on a regular basis.

If you do not have a Genesis / Parent Resources account please e-mail Jaime Velez (jvelez@mtsd.us).

Emergency School Closing Information

In the event of inclement weather, hazardous road conditions, or any other emergencies requiring us to close schools for one day, **phone messages** will be used to notify families. You may also check the following:

- **Message Line: 609-466-7610**
- **District Website: www.mtsd.k12.nj.us**
- **NJ 101.5 FM**
- **Channel 27 (Local Access Cable)**

VES Families:

In the event of an emergency school closing, the 6-day rotation cycle will remain unchanged. For example: If we have an emergency closing/snow day on Day 1, the following school day will remain Day 2. Missed days will be made up later in the school year. Please see the district calendar for details.



YWCA After School Program at VES

The YWCA of Princeton provides childcare before and after school for children who attend VES. The YWCA tailors its hours to accommodate working families, and offers children diverse and enriching activities in a safe and nurturing environment. Registration packets will be available in the main office. For more information, you may visit our website at: www.ywcaprinceton.org or call the YWCA After School Program Office at: 609-497-2100 X327. Please clearly state your name, your child's name, and a phone number where we can return your phone call.

This newsletter is available online at www.mtsd.k12.nj.us/ves.