



Venango Region
Catholic School

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

Dear Parents, Alumni, and Benefactors,

This is the first Newsletter published following the February 9th announcement of the decision to close VCHS at the end of the current academic year, completing 62 years of existence and 61 graduating classes. Grades 9-12 will close out in June, and grades 7-8 will be returning to St. Stephen School this fall. The closure of VCHS is a sad time for students, faculty, staff, parents and alumni. This was not the result that we wanted. The good news is that there is an intent to make some important improvements to St. Stephen School this summer.

We are resolved to make the most of our final spring semester together at VCHS! This spring will be a celebration of our heritage. We are planning special events and The Derrick will be featuring some stories about VC from our wondrous history. Thanks for your prayers and support during this transition.

Our **Heritage Gala** is coming up on **March 16**, to be held in the VCHS gym. This is our biggest fundraiser of the year, and we count on it to make our budget. Even when VCHS closes, the **Gala** will continue supporting St. Stephen School. We invite everyone to come! (See the **Gala** poster on the following page.)

Thanks and God Bless,

Ray Feroz, Ph.D.
VRCS Interim President

MARCH HIGHLIGHTS

HERITAGE GALA
INVITATION

DISTINGUISHED ALUMNI
+ TEACHER FEATURE

VC JUNIOR HIGH
BASKETBALL PHOTO
COLLAGE

Venango Catholic Jr. / Sr. High School
1505 West First Street
Oil City, PA 16301
814.677.3098

Saint Stephen School
214 Reed Street
Oil City, PA 16301
814.677.3035



Venango Region
Catholic School

You are cordially invited to

A Starry Night

8th Annual Heritage
Gala Dinner &
Auction

Saturday
March 16, 2024

**Venango Catholic
Jr./Sr. High School**

*Must be 21 years
of age or older
to attend.

**Call 814.677.3098
for more information.**

TEACHER FEATURE

NAME: Elizabeth Schmude

EDUCATION:

Point Park University, B.F.A. in Communications
(Focused on Photography with a Concentration in Commercial and Studio Photography)

SUBJECT: Art (Preschool-12th)

FAVORITE QUOTE: My favorite quote is from my favorite fictional teacher from *Boy Meets World*. "Believe in yourselves. Dream. Try. Do good." - Mr. George Feeny

WHY DO YOU LOVE VRCS? The best thing about teaching at VRCS is the small class sizes and the staff. With the small class sizes, I get to know the kids at a more personal level and can alter my class activities to reflect their personalities.

At VRCS, we have the best staff. Everyone is helpful, reliable, and there for each other when we need it. I know that I can count on any of my coworkers, no matter what I need.

SHARE A FEW OF SUCCESS

STORIES: Watching my students grow as artists is a success in itself.

I'd say the biggest successes would be watching my students in my elective class this year *Paint the Plow*. This was the first project of the year, and a lot of these kids hadn't taken art since I've been working at VRCS. We had all different skill levels coming together to do this project, and the students were very doubtful of themselves at first.

Seeing this project come together over the course of about a month made me really proud. We didn't win the contest, but the kids learned a lot and know what they can do differently next year. They've been excited to tell me when they've seen the plow out on the roads. I'm excited that they're excited.

BEST ADVICE FOR STUDENTS:

Step out of your comfort zone and take the risks! Join the team. Take the class. Sit with the new kid. You

don't want to look back ten years from now and wonder "what if..." It's a hard thing to do, but if I can do it anyone else can too.

WHAT OTHER INTERESTS DO YOU HAVE?

I have been a 4-H leader since 2017. I joined when I turned eight and have been involved in the program ever since.

I currently lead a club with my mom and aunt that is made up of about twelve youth between the ages of five and eighteen. We have been involved in parades, the Barrow Theatre Christmas Tree Extravaganza, window decorating contests, trunk or treats, and a whole lot more.

We mainly focus on leadership and community involvement, which has led to having 4-Hers serve on the 4-H State Council, receive their Diamond Clover (the highest award in PA 4-H), and attend many local, state and national events. As a club, we have received the Blue Ribbon Honor Club award for multiple years.



Ms. Elizabeth Schmude has been a professional photographer for about ten years, in addition to teaching art at Venango Region Catholic School for the past two years. Ms. Schmude owns her own small business, *Elizabeth Schmude Photography*. Elizabeth typically shoots on location, but she also has a studio at the historic National Transit Building in Oil City. She has worked with and had her work critiqued by professional photographers such as **Tabitha Soren** and curators such as **David Oresick** from the Mattress Factory.

ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT

DISTINGUISHED GRAD

NAME: George F. Cavanaugh

EDUCATION:

Edinboro, B.A. in Psychology and Masters courses in Counseling

Gannon University, Masters Degree in Public Administration

WHAT INFLUENCE DID VCHS HAVE ON YOUR CAREER? Likely the biggest thing I can tie back to VCHS was that it taught me how to think. My VC education facilitated my critical thinking later on in life.

WHAT DO YOU DO FOR FUN OR RECREATION?

All my life I've enjoyed hunting and particularly archery. I always enjoyed watching my two boys in their various sports. Currently, I attend all my son Andy's sprint car races. I'm a big Steelers fan. I also enjoy playing cards with friends.

DO YOU HAVE ANY FUNNY MEMORIES FROM VC?

A classmate once brought some hard cider to school. It blew up in his locker and ran all over his locker, books, and the floor.

ANY ADVICE FOR TODAY'S VRCS STUDENTS? Work 30 minutes longer each day more than your peer workers.



Contributed Photo of
George and Helen Ann Cavanaugh

TELL US ABOUT YOUR CAREER PATH:

Halfway through a Masters in Counseling at Edinboro, I was hired by the Venango-Clarion Mental Health Center as the first full time D&A therapist. While working at the Venango-Clarion Mental Health Center I had the good fortune to participate in an internship program thru the Philadelphia Child Guidance Center. I was mentored by doctors **Haley** and **Minuchin**, who were leaders in the field of structural family therapy. In 1979, I was hired by Venango County as the County Mental Health/Mental Retardation and Drug and Alcohol Administrator. In 1985, I went to work for St. Vincent's Hospital where I was charged with setting up detox programs in NW Pennsylvania. After one year, I returned to Venango County as the County Human Services Director and held that position until 2004. During that period I completed my Masters Degree. I was hired as the CEO for the Mercer County Behavioral Health Agency in 2004; Mercer basically privatized their county human services in the non-profit agency.

EDITOR'S NOTE: Mr. **George Cavanaugh** is being featured as a distinguished graduate from the VCHS Class of 1968. After graduating from Venango Christian, George began his career working full time at Warren State Hospital while completing his bachelor degree.

During his tenure in human services, George was active in a number of local, state, and national organizations. In 1988, he was the president of the PA Human Services Directors Association, and then in 1999 he became president of the PA Mental Health-Mental Retardation Administrators Association. He also served on the National Board of Behavioral Health Directors. Locally he served two terms on the Rouseville Borough Council and one term as Rouseville mayor. He was very active in Saint Venantius Church, serving as financial moderator for many decades. George currently serves as a board member or officer on a number of local non-profit agencies. ■■■

ATHLETICS

BLACK + GOLD SHOW DEDICATION ON THE B-BALL COURT

Photos by: **Gregory Knox**



Friday, February 23 was the final home game for the **Venango Catholic Junior High Basketball Team**. The home crowd saw our Vikings battle Clarion Area to a hard-fought victory. The players were recognized at halftime and our varsity cheerleaders energized the sell-out crowd!

Shown below (L to R): Garrison Snyder, Ryan Danzer, Isaac Cozad, Preston Cirell, Jack Campbell and Alex Hummel



Players with Coaches Natalie Toscano and Chad Snyder



CELEBRATING OUR KNIGHTS AND VIKES!

March has just begun, and our VRCS students are busy with all sorts of extra-curricular activities.

- **Logan Rakow** and **Bob Wheeler**, VCHS 12th graders, competed in the D10 Swimming Championships at the Spire Institute.
- **St. Stephen boys basketball** and **cheerleaders** participated in the 39th Annual St. Patrick Basketball Tournament on March 2-3.
- **Anthony Phillips**, VCHS 11th grade, represented VC at the VEX State Robotics Competition, March 4 at Pennwest Clarion.
- **Olive Toto** (SSS 6th grade), **John Lander** (VCHS 8th grade), **Logan Rakow** and **Bob Wheeler** (VCHS 12th graders) will attend the YMCA Western PA District Swim meet at the Spire Institute, March 7-9.
- **Olivia Miller** and **Alice Moll**, VCHS 12th graders, will participate in the PMEA Region 11 Chorus, March 7-9 at Venango Catholic/Oil City High School.



VIKING PROUD!

VC student **Anthony Phillips** before heading to the VEX Robotics State Competition!



ALL-SCHOOL LITURGY

On Thursday, February 29, students and faculty from St. Stephen School and Venango Catholic Jr./Sr. High School traveled by bus to Titusville, PA to celebrate Mass at St. Titus Church. Thank you to **Rev. Christopher Barnes**, pastor, for hosting our VRCS family.



HERITAGE GALA

Venango Region Catholic School
1505 West First Street
Oil City, PA 16301
814.677.3098

Greetings,

On Saturday, March 16, 2024, Venango Region Catholic School will celebrate its 8th Annual Heritage Gala, *A Starry Night*, at Venango Catholic Jr./Sr. High School campus. For over 125 years, families in the Venango region have had access to a legacy of academic excellence and faith-based learning. Thanks to the generous patronage of local businesses, individual sponsors, and gala attendees, we have raised over \$230,000 to benefit Catholic education since our inaugural event in 2017.

As you may have heard in the news, Venango Catholic High School will close at the end of this school year. Even though we are devastated by this decision, VRCS is still committed to continuing Catholic education in our area with preschool through 8th grade at St. Stephen School. It is our goal to make this year's Gala the best one yet so we can finish this school year strong and honor Venango Catholic, and its history, the way it deserves. All proceeds from this year's Gala will go towards educational and operational expenses for this school year. As always, any fundraising efforts benefit the current students of VRCS.

If you have supported us in the past by purchasing advertisements in our keepsake program, we thank you for your generosity and your commitment to maintaining a quality educational system here in the Venango region. Our wide range of sponsorship packages offers a variety of exclusive perks from which our benefactors can choose—ranging from complementary tickets for the main event to a premium, reserved table, and complimentary bottle of champagne to advertising space in our program. And the biggest benefit to you: increased visibility of your business to the over 150 guests who attend our gala.

Included with this letter is information outlining sponsorship and donation opportunities for this event.

Our community is abundantly blessed with cheerful givers whose love and generosity enrich the Venango region, and we thank you for everything you do. If you would like to partner with us for this year's festivities, please complete the enclosed sponsorship information form and return it by **March 8, 2024**. If you have any questions or would like to get more information about how to participate in this year's Heritage Gala, please feel free to reach out to either of us by contacting the VRCS office at 814-677-3098 or by email misti.kresinski@venangocatholic.org or beth.metz@venangocatholic.org

Thank you for your consideration and we look forward to your partnership this year!

Sincerely,

Misti Kresinski
St. Stephen Administrative Assistant
Venango Region Catholic School

Beth Metz
Finance Manager
Venango Region Catholic School

Auction and Gala Benefits the Students of Venango Region Catholic School

GIFTS OF GOODS OR SERVICES

The Heritage Gala is also seeking donations of goods or services for our live and silent auctions. The approximate value of auction items should be at or in excess of \$150.

HERITAGE GALA GIFT WISH LIST

New or unusual products

One-of-a-kind items

Gifts that can be bundled with other goods or services

Creative learning or hobby-related items

Vacation or getaway packages

Outdoor equipment (lawn, garden, etc.)

Sports

Collectables

Home Décor

Automotive

Spiritual items

Dining and Shopping

Art

EVENT PROGRAM ADVERTISEMENTS

Back Cover \$500

Full page: \$400

Half page: \$250

Quarter page: \$100

Friends of VRCS acknowledgement: \$25

SPONSOR A TEACHER (\$150)

This donation sponsors a full-time faculty member to attend the 2024 Heritage Gala.

Donors are acknowledged in the program.

				LEGACY \$5000			PATRON \$1000-\$4000			PARTNER \$500-\$999		
Front cover recognition, full page advertisement in the Heritage Gala keepsake program and advertisement in the 2023-2024 yearbook. *	•											
Presenting sponsorship rights to one key area of the event. (Your name/logo attached to one of the following: event or bar.) *	•											
Presenting sponsorship rights to one key area of the event. (Your name/logo attached to one of the following: live auction or silent auction) *		•										
Corporate name/logo included in all print promotion. *	•											
Recognition as a Viking Society <i>Benefactor of Distinction</i> on VRCS website. (The Viking Society honors our supporters who make an annual gift of \$1000 or more)	•	•										
Event Signage. *	•	•										
Advertisement in the Heritage Gala keepsake program. *	Full Page	Full Page	Half Page									
VRCS business listing on school social media sites.	•	•	•									
Premium table and champagne for your guests.	•											
Tickets to the Heritage Gala	8	2										
Our Appreciation and Gratitude for your Support of Catholic Education	•	•	•									

* Must commit and submit logo/advertisement by 3/08/24



Gala & Auction

BENEFITTING THE STUDENTS OF VENANGO REGION CATHOLIC SCHOOL

SPONSOR INFORMATION

Name/Contact Person	Phone
Business/Organization (As it should appear for recognition)	
Mailing Address	Email

SPONSOR OPPORTUNITIES

☐ Faculty/Staff Sponsor ____@ \$150

Name: _____

Name: _____

Name: _____

PROGRAM ADVERTISEMENTS

(Personal or business Ads)

☐ Full Page (4.75" x 7.6") \$400

☐ Half Page (4.75" x 3.75") \$250

☐ Quarter Page (4.75" x 1.75", OR 2.4" x 3.75") \$100

☐ Friends of VRCS acknowledgement ____@ \$25

Name: _____

Name: _____

Name: _____

**Please send a copy of the ad as you'd like it to appear in the program.*

***For personal advertisements, we advise creating a textbox in Word and either emailing or attaching a copy of your ad with this form. We are happy to help with this if needed.*

GIFTS OF GOODS

OR SERVICES

Approximate Value of Auction Item(s):

\$ _____

Description:

Thank you for your Support!

Have Questions? Need more info?

Misti Kresinski, Administrative Assistant

misti.kresinski@venangocatholic.org

814.677.3035

Beth Metz, Finance Manager

beth.metz@venangocatholic.org

814.677.3098

*** FORMS MUST BE RECEIVED BY**

March 8, 2024*

1505 W First Street, Oil City, PA 16301

OFFICE USE ONLY

DATE RECEIVED: _____ AMOUNT: _____ CHECK #: _____

VRCS Tax ID #75-624116