Pencil, by Danielle Clark,
James Madison High School,
Grade 12, Teacher: Marielle Mariano.
Grand Opening
Wednesday, January 10th, 7AM

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Dear Readers:

This week, the Vienna and Oakton Connection turns over its pages to the youth and students. We asked principals and teachers from area schools to encourage students to contribute their words, pictures and photos for our annual Children’s Issue.

The response as always was enormous. While we were unable to publish every piece we received, we did our best to put together a paper with a fair sampling of the submitted stories, poems, drawings, paintings, photographs and other works of art.

We appreciate the extra effort made by school staff to gather the materials during their busy time leading up to the holidays. We’d also like to encourage both schools and parents to mark their 2018 calendars for early December, the deadline for submissions for next year’s Children’s Connection.

Please keep us in mind as your children continue to create spectacular works of art and inspiring pieces of writing in the coming year. The children’s issue is only a part of our year-round commitment to cover education and our local schools. As always, the Connection welcomes letters to the editor, story ideas, calendar listings and notices of local events from our readers. Photos and other submissions about special events at schools are especially welcome for our weekly schools pages.

Our preferred method for material is e-mail, which should be sent to north@connectionnewspapers.com, but you can reach us by mail at 1606 King Street, Alexandria, VA 22314 or call 703-778-9414 with any questions.

Editor Kemal Kurshahic

Welcome

Photo by Adriana Bates, James Madison High School, Grade 11, Teacher: Johanna Little.
Children's Connection

Colvin Run Elementary School
Artwork submitted by Lauren Grimm, Art Teacher.

By Ellen Zeng, Grade 6, Residence: Great Falls

By Anna Suh, Grade 6, Residence: Vienna

By Maxwell Thompson, Grade 2, Residence: Vienna

By Thamer Altamimi, Grade 5, Residence: Great Falls

By Jordan Glover, Grade 3, Residence: Vienna

By Eli Kozlowski, Grade 1, Residence: Vienna

By Ryan Saxon, Grade 2, Residence: Vienna

By Kyra Ranakusuma, Grade 3, Residence: Vienna
What makes a good parent?
A parent that keeps me safe and still does activities.
— Quinn Brown, Age 8

What is one thing that you would change about school?
5 hours of recess and 2 hours of P.E.
— Quinn Brown, Age 8

What is your favorite animal?
Personally, I like sharks, tigers, and bobcats.
— Ellie Vaughan, Age 9

What makes a good friend?
Someone who includes people in their games and helps friends. Also, someone who stands up for friends is a good friend.
— Connor Prentice, Age 8

What do you want to be when you grow up?
I want to be a mechanic or a football player in the NFL. I want to be a mechanic because my dad, mom and everybody in my family, and football is my life-long sport.
— Joey Parrish, Age 8

What is your favorite toy?
My favorite toy is my basketball hoop in my basement because I can pretend that I'm an NBA player.
— Tommy McKee, Age 8

What do you want to be when you grow up?
I want to be an actor because you can be super famous.
— Carson Wright, Age 8

What makes a good parent?
You need to watch your kids.
— Lily Siddon, Age 8

What do you want to be when you grow up?
I want to be a soccer player because I love soccer. I also want to be a security guard, or maybe military, or a youtuber, NBA football player, traveler, and work at a hospital.
— Jayden Dong, Age 8

What makes a good friend?
A good friend listens to everything you say.
— Molly Scott, Age 8

What would you change about school?
I would make bullying against the rules everywhere. Also, I would make P.E. where you just run around talking.
— Nola Kenney, Age 9

What makes a good parent?
If they help you with homework, listen to you, and tell you they love you. If you could give your parents, family or friends any gift that didn’t cost money what would that gift be?
Hugs. Lots and lots of hugs.
— Nola Kenney, Age 9

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If you could give your parents, family or friends any gift that didn’t cost money what would that gift be?
So so so so so so much love!
— Ryan Cordeau, Age 8

Vienna Elementary
What do the third graders think and say (Teacher: Cheryl Allen).

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By Scarlett Zhong, 9, Grade: 4, Flint Hill Elementary School, Vienna, Art Teacher: Yanshun Sui

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The Great Secret

There once was an old turtle
Whose hobby was to boast.
Every day he thought
Of things to boast about.

Then he realized
He knew the Great Secret!
The turtle went out and about,
Egging animals to guess.

The animals went and left,
But only after one good guess!
They lined up like a coiling snake
Outside the old turtle’s house.

At the end of the day
A wise lion was the last visitor
And he guessed once and for all—
“The secret is that there is no secret!”

The old turtle gasped and said
“How did you know?
I promise not to boast
For the rest of my life!”

— Dahee Jeong, 10, Oakton Elementary, Grade 4,
Teacher: Michelle Tarr

Yan’s Art Studio
Fairfax

Yan’s Art Studio
Fairfax

By Timmy Guo,
8, Grade 3,
Oakton Elementary,
Yan’s Art Studio

By Marissa Lin,
7, of Vienna,
Grade 2, Topic:
Halloween,
Type: Crayons.

Yan’s Art Studio
Fairfax

By Marissa Lin,
7, of Vienna,
Grade 2, Topic:
Eating Ice Cream,
Type: Markers.

Cynthia Yuxin Huang of Oakton, 11, Grade: 6,
Sunrise Valley Elementary, Reston
Teacher: Peter Huffer.
My Favorite Class, by Ashley Yan, 6, Oakton Elementary

“My Sweet Home,” by Ashley Yan, 6, Oakton Elementary

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James Madison High School

Madison Art Gallery

*Photo by Frederich Lightner, Grade 11, Teacher: Johanna Little*

*Watercolor, by Tatiana Arezua, Grade 12, Teacher: Marielle Mariano*

*Mixed media, by Myles Temple, Grade 9, Teacher: Marielle Mariano*

*Digital painting, by Alexander Rapavy, Grade 12, Teacher: Genette Boyle*

*Pen and ink, by Philiana Quan, Grade 12, Teacher: Brandy Carter*

*Seaweed, by Paige Harrington, Grade 12, Fused glass, Teacher: Julia Bargo*

*Textured Bowl, by Tommy Beckle, Grade 12, Teacher: Julia Bargo*

*Ocean Breeze, by Savannah Neuman, Grade 10, Pottery, Teacher: Julia Bargo*

*Seaweed, by Paige Harrington, Grade 12, Fused glass, Teacher: Julia Bargo*

*Pen and ink, by Philiana Quan, Grade 12, Teacher: Brandy Carter*

*Photo by Bailey Shannon, Grade 11, Teacher: Johanna Little*

*Girl, oil, by Krissa Rehberg, Grade 12, Teacher: Brandy Carter*

*Pencil, by Caitlin Moore, Grade 11, Teacher: Marielle Mariano*

Sand & Sea, by Nadine Stilson, Grade 12, Pottery, Teacher: Julia Bargo.
James Madison High School

Madison Art Gallery

Surreal, by Luke Cann, Grade 11, Teacher: Deirdre Forgione.

Graphic design, by Joshua Nagy, Grade 12, Teacher: Genette Boyle.

Digital painting, by Noah Rupy, Grade 11, Teacher: Genette Boyle.

Digital drawing, by Andrea Lu, Grade 11, Teacher: Genette Boyle.

Digital drawing, by Jonathan Headrick, Grade 11, Teacher: Genette Boyle.
By Aaron Shaw of Vienna, 6, Sunrise Valley Elementary School, Reston, Teacher: Ms. Barna

By Elliot Shaw, of Vienna, 6, Sunrise Valley Elementary School, Reston, Teacher: Ms. Bowser

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Acting is something I have been wishing for since when I was a small, innocent toddler to this moment in time. Whether it was my birthday, 11:11 pm/am, or a penny in a pond, becoming an actress has always been my desire. “Wish upon a star,” they say; something I have been doing for years. I hope, just one day, that star decides to shine brighter than it has before and come down to make my dream as bright as it is. Although, with every dream or opportunity comes the challenges. Far, deep into the mind, comes doubt. It is one of the worst emotions to deal with. Giving you the doubt to ever reach your dream, the doubt to ever follow the path you want to be on, is a horrible feeling.

Not only that, but opinions come into place. Even if you might not want to hear them sometimes, they will always come back to haunt you. “You’ll never make it. You should become something that’s actually realistic,” you should this and that.

But, something also tells me that I shouldn’t listen to those opinions. If you believe you can get to that path without hurting anyone or giving up on yourself, go ahead and live your life. Don’t listen to what others think of you or what other misleading things they need to say, listen to the positive thoughts coming to you. Wake up, smile, and tell yourself, “Today is my day.” Your day to shine, to fly, and to live your dream because, “You have a dream.”

—Cyriene Belghith, 7, of Reston

By Yasmine McCarthy, 6, Grade 1, Marshall Road Elementary School, Vienna, Art teacher: Ms. Yanshun Sui (Yan’s Art Studio)
Children's Connection

Mysterious Footprints

By Ajit Sivakumar/Great Falls
Grade 6 at Forest Edge ES, Reston

In the middle of the night, I heard a bang. I gazed around my room and flicked the lights on. I saw muddy footprints leading out of my room. They were not regular footprints because they were paw shaped. I assumed that it was my dog so I followed the footprints down the stairs. I made my way down to the kitchen. Munching noises were coming from a cabinet so I walked over to it. I nudged it opened and saw something unexpected, a raccoon. It looked me straight in the eyes, and then leapt out of the cabinet and went to an open window which I had not noticed previously. I scurried over to the window and slammed it shut. I went to check on my dog. He was peacefully sleeping and made a grunting noise when I got close. I decided everything was fine so I went upstairs to my room to see how the creature gained entry to my room. It was obvious when I walked in. My window was also open and there was a ladder sticking into it. Surprised, I nudged the ladder away from my window and closed my window shut. Then I glanced at the clock, turned off the light, and went right back to my cozy bed.

Self Portrait: Chase and me

By Scarlett Zhong, 9,
Grade: 4, Flint Hill Elementary School, Vienna,
Art Teacher: Yanshun Sui
What to Get a Teenager for the Holidays

With the holidays just around the corner, hoards of parents rush to get all sorts of gifts for their children. The most common item: electronic devices. The new generation of teenagers have been exposed to advanced technology ever since they were born. Anywhere you go, you can find teenagers glued to their phones, unaware of their surroundings. So why are teenagers being gifted even more electronics when they’re already addicted to them?

An alternative to electronics for a teenager’s holiday gift is something really meaningful. Many people don’t realize that deep down, teenagers will actually appreciate gifts that aren’t technology based. Some of these gifts can be cute notebooks and pens, sports related items, fun sewing kits, and old fashion record players.

The reason for this apparent addiction to technology for teenagers has many causes. First of all, when one kid uses technology, everyone else wants to have it too, to fit in with the trend. During teenage years, it is very stressful, from grades, to romance, to social life. When teenagers experience stress, technology becomes an instant way to find relief. Just like alcohol and tobacco, although technology is nowhere near as bad as those, it gives the same pleasure, an escape from reality.

For those debating on what to gift a teenager for the holidays, something to consider are sincere gifts unrelated to technology. This will bring a teenager out of their technology bubble, leading to a different happiness than the addictive technology pleasure. So, go get a nice present for a teenager, or even hand make it! They will love it even more than an electronic device!

Annie Zhang of McLean, 13, Grade 8, Cooper Middle School, Teacher: Lindsay Bovenzi.

Imaginary Self Portrait by Sara Auer, Age 13, 8th Grade, McLean

Pixel by Evan Judge, Age 10, 5th Grade, Oakton
HOILY SOBER-RIDE
Free Sober Riders. The annual Holiday SoberRider program will operate 8 p.m. - 4 a.m. each night from Friday, Dec. 15, 2017–Thursday, Jan. 1, 2018. area residents age 21 and older celebrating with alcohol may download Lyft to their phones, then enter the code in the app’s “Promo” section to receive their no cost (up to $15) safe transportation home. WRAP’s weekly Holiday SoberRide promo codes will be posted at 2 p.m. on Dec. 15, Dec. 23 and Dec. 31 on www.SoberRide.com.

TUESDAY/JAN. 9
English as a Second Language Classes, 7-8 p.m. at St. Mark Christian Formation Center, 9972 Vale Road, Vienna. Come help 150+ adult learners learn English language, prepare for American citizenship, learn to converse fluently in English, improve their writing skills, and integrate into the local community. Call 703-960-9380, email stmarksesl@gmail.com, or visit www.stmarksesl.org.

SUPPORT GROUPS
Are You A Caregiver? Shepherd’s Center of Oakton/ Vienna Caregivers’ Support Group meets 11:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. the 2nd Wednesday of each month. February 15, 2017 at UUCF - Program Building, 2709 Hunter Mill Rd, Oakton, VA. For more info contact facilitator Jodi Brayton, 703-821-6838 juarr5@verizon.net.

Volunteers Needed
RSVP, a volunteer network for seniors seeking service opportunities in and around Fairfax County, Arlington County and the City of Alexandria, offers a wide array of opportunities for volunteers 55 and older. RSVP volunteers enjoy flexible schedules, free accident and liability insurance while serving, and reimbursement for mileage and meal reimbursement. To sign up for an upcoming orientation, email Carly Hubicki at chubicki@volunteerfairfax.org or call RSVP at 703-403-5360. To learn more about RSVP, visit www.rsvp-vi.org.

Shepherd’s Center of McLean-Arlington-Falls Church, 1205 Dolley Madison Blvd., McLean continues to have an urgent need for new volunteers to help area senior citizens get to and from their medical and therapy appointments. To find out more about the Shepherd’s Center and how you can volunteer to provide transportation and other services, call the Center at 703-506-2199 or e-mail the Center at info@scmac.org. The Center’s website is www.smacac.org.

Master Gardener Training
The Fairfax County Master Gardener Association offers plant clinics, home turf training or speakers for homeowner’s meetings. To find out more, visit www.VGMasterGardener.org or call MG Help Desk at 703-324-8556 for more.

Volunteers Needed: PBF is looking for empathetic and caring volunteers to make phone calls to older adults who may be feeling socially isolated. The commitment is one 3-hour shift per week for one year. Located in Arlington. Ages 21 & up. Intensive training provided. Learn more and apply here: https://pvac.org/caregiving-volunteering. Questions? Email ljpadgett@pvac.org.

Good is not good, where better is expected.
-Thomas Fuller

By KENNETH H. LOURIE

Though I want to treat the disease – and my having been diagnosed with the disease, with respect, I don’t want to treat it with the utmost reverence. I mean, it’s no Pope. It’s an affliction, not an affection. Certainly not one worth embracing anyway. But defined down, set down, and set out on a path of treatment that is at least the right thing, or a right thing. And that’s a laugh with which we can all live.
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