

## May 5, 2015 – Staunton City Schools Tip Sheet

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### Bessie Weller Club Hosts Food Drive

(STAUNTON, VA – May 5, 2015) The Bessie Weller K-Kids Club recently hosted a food drive to benefit the Blue Ridge Area Food Bank. The drive ran from April 22 through May 1. School-wide more than 700 items were collected for the food bank, which provides emergency food assistance to families in our community.

The Bessie Weller K-Kids Club is sponsored by the Shenandoah Valley Kiwanis Club. Children in grades 3-5 have the opportunity to participate in this community service club at the school, while being a part of the bigger effort of the Kiwanis Club at the community and global levels.

"It's a great opportunity for students to make a difference in their community in a real way," said Nicole Hostetter, co-advisor for the club. "They took charge of the drive by making posters, setting the dates, making announcements each morning, and collecting the items. Not only did they show caring for others, they showed great responsibility and leadership."

"We are helping the community members who need food," said fourth-grader and K-Kids Vice President, Aayanna Lewis-Taylor. "You don't know who you're going to help. You might even be helping someone in your school."



Fourth grader Will Catanese helps K-Kids Vice President Aayanna Lewis-Taylor load boxed goods into the collection barrel.

## Oechslin Semi-Finalist in National Competition

(STAUNTON, VA – May 5, 2015) With a performance of a sonnet and monologue from Shakespeare, Robert E. Lee High School student, Nora Oechslin placed as a semi-finalist in the 32<sup>nd</sup> annual English-Speaking Union (ESU) National Shakespeare Competition, held on April 27 at Lincoln Center Theater in New York City. Nora won the ESU Lexington, VA Branch regional competition earlier this year.

When asked about her experience Nora stated, “Everyone at the ESU was so supportive and kind. I felt surrounded by people who wanted me to do well. It was incredible.” Mr. John Fregosi, the theater teacher at Robert E. Lee High School who has been instrumental in Nora’s training and success stated, “Nora was chosen by her peers to represent Lee High School from a small but talented group of students in my Theater 2 class. The course concentrated on Classical Shakespeare acting training, and Nora took up these lessons with great talent and industry. We were thrilled to support Nora on this incredible opportunity and couldn’t be more proud of her, especially with her being so young compared to her competitors from other schools. She made it to the semi-finals in New York along with only 56 other students from across the country.”

Nora and other branch winners had the opportunity to spend a weekend in New York City with other students from across the country who share a love of theater, language and, particularly, Shakespeare. They were provided with two full days of educational and cultural activities in New York City, including an exclusive acting workshop at the Tisch School of the Arts at New York University and a performance of *Something Rotten!* on Broadway.



Nora Oechslin of Robert E. Lee High School was a semi-finalist in the 2015 English-Speaking Union National Shakespeare Competition at Lincoln Center Theater in New York City.

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