

March 18, 2015 – Staunton City Schools Tip Sheet

Contact: Brenda Lovekamp
School Board Clerk
540-332-3920

Lee Student Competed for Unusual Scholarship

(STAUNTON, VA – March 18, 2015) A Robert E. Lee High School senior competed for an unusual scholarship in February. DoSomething.org, an organization for young people and social change, encourages their members to tackle campaigns that impact every cause -- from poverty to violence to the environment, and more. This organization created a scholarship opportunity for students willing to take time out of their day to bring a smile or happiness to a local senior citizen in their community with a St. Valentine's Day card. While St. Valentine's Day is widely known as the holiday of love, not everyone feels that love and instead, many refer to the day as National Loneliness Awareness Day. Robert E. Lee High School teacher, Ginny Hocker discovered this scholarship opportunity and passed the information on to senior Marcus Warren who set out to meet the challenge.

Eligibility for the scholarship entry was earned through the number of cards distributed, with the first card serving as one entry and every additional three cards serving as another entry. The initial goal was to distribute 250 St. Valentine's Day cards, providing Marcus 84 opportunities to have his name drawn for the scholarship. With the help of staff and students at Robert E. Lee High school, a total of 811 St. Valentine's Day cards were generated, which gave Marcus 271 chances to win the scholarship.

St. Valentine's Day cards were delivered to all of the assisted living communities and nursing homes in the Staunton area. There was such an abundance of cards that they had enough to take to the Commonwealth Center for Children and Adolescents and the Western State Hospital as well. The scholarship drawing took place at the beginning of March, and while Marcus does not yet know if one of his entries was drawn as the winner of the scholarship, he enjoyed the opportunity to spread a touch of love and happiness to so many in our community through this project.



Robert E. Lee senior Marcus Warren smiles as he talks about the St. Valentine's Day card project.

Reconstruction: A Factory Education

(STAUNTON, VA – March 18, 2015) In a recent 4th grade classroom at McSwain, one could hear the teacher state with finality, “That just isn’t good enough! You’re fired!” While that comment might sound as though the class was acting out a popular television show, in fact it was a part of their Virginia studies where the students were recreating factory work during Reconstruction, the period following the Civil War in which Congress passed laws designed to rebuild the country and bring the southern states back into the Union. During this time in history, factory workers worked for low wages and endured long hours and terrible working conditions. On this particular day at McSwain, the students worked for twenty minutes with loud factory noises blaring, poor lighting, and no chairs to gain a better understanding of what it was like to be a factory worker in the early 1900’s.

To begin the process, each student drew a model and each group chose one to be the prototype. Students were assigned a small portion of the drawing and an inspector was chosen to determine whether the product was of a good enough quality to keep. The “supervisor,” played by the teacher, moved through the line demanding faster work and less talk, while the “factory managers” made occasional appearances to demand faster production and better quality.

“Workers” who were caught talking on the line were sometimes fired, leaving holes in the production line where other workers had to pick up the slack. When more paper and different colors were needed, a student assigned to run for supplies was sent scurrying across the room.

When the production line was halted, students discussed their emotions and experiences, often mentioning being upset with their co-workers who weren’t keeping up with the demands. This creative reenactment gave the students a better understanding of the plight of workers during this time in our history.



John Isaacs, William Brooks and Kayla Bullard try to keep up with the pace as they recreate a production line in their 4th grade Virginia studies class.

Lee Students Visit Monticello

(STAUNTON, VA – March 18, 2015) Over one hundred students in Advanced Placement U.S. History and U.S./VA History ventured over the mountain recently to visit the home of Thomas Jefferson, our nation's third President and a native of Albemarle County. The students and their teachers, Mr. Terry, Mrs. Goss, Mr. Hatcher and Ms. Knoxville, were treated to a 2 ½ hour tour of Jefferson's home and the Monticello grounds, including the beautiful Visitor's Center. Although the weather was a bit overcast and rainy, all of the students who participated in the trip enjoyed the day immensely.

The trip was the result of a grant by the Thomas Jefferson Monticello Foundation through their Charles Angel Fund. This full scholarship covered the cost of transportation and admission for all of the students to visit Monticello. The Social Studies Department applied for this grant back in the fall and were excited to have been chosen as one of the schools to benefit from the fund.

Students who participated in the trip shared that this experience helped them better understand Jefferson not only as a President but also as an individual. One student shared, "I had been to Monticello in elementary school but this time was better because I appreciate it even more." Mrs. Goss was visiting Monticello for the first time and said, "I had no idea Jefferson set his house up in a museum-like fashion so visitors had a learning experience while they were there."

The Charles Angel Scholarship can be received in recurring years so the teachers of the Social Studies Department hope to provide this experience for future classes. In the meantime, they plan to use this trip to help reinforce the lessons of Jefferson's role in our country's development. It is their hope that the tour will help students remember Jefferson's importance for many years to come.



Lee history students visit Monticello.

Shelburne Teacher Receives DAR Award

(STAUNTON, VA – March 18, 2015) Shelburne Middle School’s social studies teacher, Heather Cooper, was recognized as the area’s Outstanding Teacher of American History by The Beverley Manor Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution. Mrs. Cooper was nominated for this award by Shelburne Principal, Robert Craft, who commented, “Heather thinks deeply about what she teaches and is always looking for ways to immerse students into the content. Her kids walk out of her door with a much deeper understanding and appreciation for American history.”

Mrs. Cooper received this award in a ceremony at the Staunton Public Library that also recognized student essay winners from the community. When she accepted the award she had this to say: “Today I am a teacher who still believes that every student counts. As a history teacher I don’t want my students to merely know facts, but to experience what it may have been like to live during a specific time period. Furthermore, I want them to explore how history still impacts us today. I work to challenge my students with questions and to allow them to come up with answers. I hope that in doing so I am teaching them to be life-long learners, to contribute to society and if I am lucky, to love history.”

During the ceremony a Lee High School student, Willson Baxley, received a scholarship from the DAR. Mrs. Cooper was touched by this and shared, “While it was nice to be recognized for what I do in the classroom, what really touched me was seeing a former student receive a scholarship. To know that I had a part in what he achieved and what he wants to do with his future is what makes me want to keep teaching. I was honored to receive an award and to be recognized for trying to bring meaning to history for my students. However, when Willson recognized me that spoke volumes to my heart.”



Shelburne social studies teacher, Heather Cooper received the Outstanding Teacher of American History award from Jane Lobb, representative of the Beverley Manor Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution.



Willson Baxley, senior at Robert E. Lee was awarded a scholarship by the Beverley Manor Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution.