

NEXT PTO MEETING: Tuesday, December 8 at 6:30 pm via [Zoom](#)

This is a long email! Make sure to expand your email to see our whole message. You'll see a singing hedgehog at the end!



Principal Seidl's Spotlight

Stronger Together in 2020-21

Welcome to the short month of December! My hope is that your Fall break last week went well and provided everyone with an opportunity to rest and reset for the final three weeks of the 2020 part of our school year. While this year Thanksgiving may have looked and felt different due to the quarantine and current guidance to limit contact, it served to remind me of the value of connection.

This Fall we purchased a smaller home, and, during the break, I worked on organizing pictures - after 20 years in my current home, it seems that I amassed a great many things including photos! As I looked at the pictures I realized how much I miss connecting - so many photos were of family and friend gatherings and celebrations, and I simply miss the connection.

December brings a two week break where we are not connecting in the same way that we have been. While that brings an opportunity for us to breathe, it may also lead to an increased sense of isolation and lack of connection - especially if we are to maintain limited time with extended family as we were for Thanksgiving. To help support our hedgies during this longer break, we are hosting a virtual neighborhood gallery walk. Our goal is to have families experience a connection during December. In the upcoming material pick up, you will find a coloring page (see above image). We ask that your hedgie decorate this image and display it for those on the sidewalk passing by to enjoy by 12/21/20. At some point during the break, our hope is that you can find a time to walk or drive through our VHE neighborhood and connect with fellow VHE hedgies. I plan on walking with my family through the neighborhood after a fresh snowfall! The goal is to provide another way for our VHE community to feel a sense of connection with each other.

Speaking of connection, during the Thanksgiving break, I was driving down Odana road and saw a van with the VHE vehicle magnet! I yelled aloud for my family to notice the vehicle and tried to see what fellow hedgie was inside as we travelled toward our home. It again struck me how, during this quarantine, we look for ways to

connect. On that note, if you would like additional vehicle magnets, please feel free to contact me (mseidl@madison.k12.wi.us). I have several remaining and would be happy to send you one or two!

In closing, I want to take this opportunity to thank those who are serving as room parents this school year. Your work and support to keep our VHE classroom communities together is recognized and greatly valued. It is yet another way to support connections that may be impacted by the pandemic.



2020 has certainly been a year to remember, and while we have all learned many new technical tools from Seesaw to zoom, we have also learned many important life lessons. For me that includes the power and value of connection. Enjoy the break,
-Mary

Events at a Glance | DECEMBER

ALL YEAR

Please reach out if your family needs assistance.

Rachael Nachtwey, Social Worker
rlnachtwey@madison.k12.wi.us

DECEMBER 2

3rd GRADE
MATERIALS PICKUP

11:00 - 1:00
VHE Parking Lot

DECEMBER 2

PARENT EMPOWERMENT
GROUP

6:30 PM
[Join Zoom Meeting](#)

DECEMBER 4

KINDERGARTEN
MATERIALS PICKUP

DECEMBER 8

PTO MEETING via Zoom

6:30 - 7:30 pm
Zoom link [HERE](#)

DECEMBER 9

MATERIALS PICKUP
GRADES 1/2 AND 4/5

11:00 - 1:00
VHE Parking Lot

DECEMBER 18

KINDERGARTEN
MATERIALS PICKUP

DECEMBER 21 - JANUARY 1

WINTER BREAK

thankful

PTO Direct Appeal 2020-21 UPDATE

We are tremendously humbled and thankful for the outpouring of generosity by our community through the Direct Appeal.

We are thrilled to announce that we met our \$10,000 goal!

Get Your Hedgie Gear!

Looking for ways to help your kid/s feel connected to the VHE school community during virtual learning? Deck them out in a colorful tee, a cozy sweatshirt or an embroidered knit hat to show everyone how much they love their school. Order by December 7th to ensure delivery to your door before December 20. Spread some school cheer, order your hedgehoglets some hedgie gear!



[Hedgie Gear Store](#)

Help raise money for the PTO by getting dinner from Chipotle

December 9th, 4 - 8:00 pm - University Avenue location only.
See flyer below for details. (Online ordering for pickup is available!)

***Click on the flyer to enlarge or print.**

**DO GOOD
WITH BURRITOS**



Join us at our restaurant for a fundraiser to support Van Hise Elementary PTO. Just come in to the Chipotle at **4000 University Ave** in Madison on **Wednesday, December 9th** from **4:00pm to 8:00pm**. Bring in this flyer, show it on your smartphone or tell the cashier you're supporting the cause to make sure that 33% of the proceeds will be donated to Van Hise Elementary PTO.

NEW! ORDER ONLINE FOR PICKUP

Use code LBXYMT before checkout in 'promo' field. Orders placed on Chipotle.com or through the Chipotle app for pickup using this unique code will be counted towards the fundraiser.



All online orders must be placed for pickup at the same time/location of the fundraiser. Delivery cannot be counted at this time. Gift card purchases during fundraisers do not count towards total donated sales, but purchases made with an existing gift card will count. \$150 minimum event sales required to receive any donation.

Materials pick up for 2020-21

NOTE: We are shifting the pick up location to our VHE parking lot as we anticipate some colder temps and possible snow in the near future.



Wednesday, Dec. 2: 3rd Grade pick up, VHE parking lot (look for signs) 11:00-1:00

Friday, December 4: Kindergarten materials pick up

Wednesday, December 9: Pick up for grades 1/ 2 and 4/ 5, VHE parking lot (look for signs) 11:00-1:00.

Friday, December 18: Kindergarten Materials Pick up

Friday, January 15: Kindergarten Materials Pick up

Wednesday, January 20: Grades 1-5 pick up IF we remain virtual for Q3.



The PTO Needs You!

2020-21 is requiring us to get creative and do things a little differently. Please sign up to lend your energy and ideas to any of the following committee opportunities. If we all pitch in a little, we can accomplish so much!

Yearbook

We have 2 experienced volunteers leading the yearbook this year. They will need additional help given the challenges of doing this from home. This includes developing clear and easy guidelines for parents to take photos of their children and submit to cloud storage; helping to follow up with families who have not yet submitted, reaching out to staff for their photos, helping with class pages and other yearbook pages (year in review, photos of home learning, socially distanced events, etc) and marketing the yearbook.

Teacher Appreciation & Recognition

It's a hard year to be a teacher! This committee will plan ways to lift teacher/staff spirits during the year and connect them with the school community.

Online Community Building

Be part of a group to brainstorm and implement strategies for Community Building during virtual schooling. This includes brainstorming ideas for virtual events to connect families, developing an online community, using social media and other methods to engage and promote school community.

[Volunteer Sign Up](#)



LET US KNOW IF WE CAN HELP

We know some families in our community have urgent needs. The PTO has resources to help you. By working through our school Social Worker, family needs are kept private and confidential. Please be in touch with Ms. Nachtwey if your family needs assistance of any kind during these difficult times.

Rachael Nachtwey, Social Worker

New! Parent Empowerment Group: Family Connections

Bringing together families of children with special needs and learning challenges in our school community

Dear Families of the VHE community,
Virtual learning has presented many challenges for students at VHE, and these challenges may be multiplied for students with special needs and learning lags. Providing the necessary educational support for our Hedgies is a tremendous task, with parents and/or guardians playing a critical role from home. We want you to feel supported and know that you are not alone in this journey.

Earlier this year we launched a parent empowerment group for parents of black and brown students at Van Hise. It is a way to build connections for families while also lifting the voice of those in our community. We recognize a need to build this connection for other families in our community, and our family connections group will do this.

If you are interested, we invite you to join a new VHE Family Connections group **to bring together (virtually) families of children with special needs and learning challenges in our school community**. This space could evolve to best suit the needs of families: social connections, peer support, etc. Principal Seidl will join the first meeting to provide introductions for those who want to attend on December 2 at 6:30, **Join Zoom Meeting** link.

Respectfully,
Principal Seidl and the Van Hise PTO

Purpose of Family Connections Group:

To connect VHE families with children who experience learning challenges - students may have an Individual Education Plan and/or diagnosed learning obstacle such as dyslexia/dysgraphia, etc. Bringing families together to discuss successes, challenges, hopes, goals and to exchange ideas. It will be a safe and comfortable place where frank and honest discussions can take place and are encouraged.

If, during discussion, parents have ideas for how Van Hise PTO could help to support your Hedgie's learning, they should please feel free to reach out to prez@vanhisepto.org.



A Music Note from Ms. Jenks

Coming Soon, 3rd, 4th and 5th graders will begin a recorder unit! As in the past, 3rd graders will begin recorders and compose and compile their own collection of recorder tunes. 4th graders will be learning music to play along with a special Madison Symphony Event (all virtual). 5th graders will be able to play virtual recorder chamber music.

**Need something to do over
break...**

Here are a few suggestions for things to do over this break (<https://handsonaswegrow.com/fun-things-over-winter-break-kids/>):

- READ TOGETHER - anything at any time!
- Color a coloring page completely
- Cut paper snowflakes
- Make a fort to cover the living room
- Watch a favorite movie inside the fort
- Build a snowman (real or a craft)
- Donate old toys & books to a local charity or daycare
- Do a puzzle bigger than you've ever done before
- Write a thank you letter to someone in gratitude
- Go on a flashlight scavenger hunt
- Make a magazine collage
- Stay in pajamas all day
- Go sledding
- Drink hot chocolate
- Look at photos from the year
- Do a year-end interview



A friendly reminder on this Cyber Monday Evening!!

Did you know that the PTO can receive donations through your Amazon purchases using Amazon Smile? Visit [AmazonSmile](https://smile.amazon.com) and, on your first visit, select Van Hise Elementary PTO to receive donations from eligible purchases before you begin shopping. They will remember your selection, and then every eligible purchase you make at smile.amazon.com will result in a donation. See smile.amazon.com/about for more information.



Requesting Gently Used Winter Gear

As you begin to pull out winter gear and find that items may not fit anymore, please consider making a donation to Van Hise Elementary during our next supplies pick up. *Gently* used elementary school student coats, boots, and gloves/mittens are being accepted. Donations can be made by simply putting the bagged items in the trunk of your car for contactless drop off at our next materials pick up (this Wednesday, Dec. 2 for third grade; next Wednesday, Dec. 9 for grades 1/ 2, and 4/ 5). Thank you!



Coping Resources to support our Hedgies during the Pandemic

[Holidays During the Pandemic: Tips for reducing stress, helping kids cope, and making new traditions](#)

[How to Ask What Kids Are Feeling: Ways to get insight into how your kids are handling stressful times](#)

[How to Help Your Kids Handle Disappointment: Tools for coping with disappointment during the coronavirus crisis](#)

You've reached the end. We hope to see you Tuesday



12/8 at the PTO meeting! Check www.vanhisepto.org for updates.

Van Hise Elementary School
Madison, Wisconsin



VHE SCHOOL WEBSITE * VHE PTO WEBSITE