

# The Hedgehog Herald

Van Hise Elementary Monthly Newsletter

February 2025

**NEXT PTO MEETING: Tuesday, February 11th at 6:30pm. IN PERSON @ VHE in the library. Zoom link [HERE](#)**

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



[www.VanHisePTO.org](http://www.VanHisePTO.org)



## We Welcome YOU!

Our monthly PTO Meeting is coming up on Tuesday, February 11th.

There are lots of activities to plan, and we'd appreciate your voice!

- Please send any questions to [prez@vanhisepto.org](mailto:prez@vanhisepto.org) by Monday, February 10th.
- PTO provides child care free of charge to families. Email [prez@vanhisepto.org](mailto:prez@vanhisepto.org) if you plan to bring a child(ren) so we can plan accordingly.

As always, check out our website at [www.vanhisepto.org](http://www.vanhisepto.org) for up to date news.

## Events at a Glance | FEBRUARY

### February 7

Open Gym (6-8pm)

### February 11

February PTO Meeting  
6.30PM in VHE Library  
or **ZOOM**

### February 18

Shake Shack Fundraiser (11am - 9pm)

### February 21

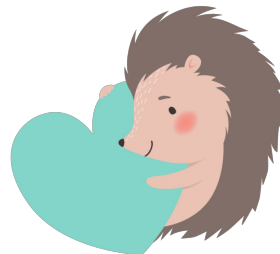
NO SCHOOL - Staff Only Day

**February 25**

An Evening with MMSD School Board Member Savion Castro  
6.30PM in VHE Library

## A Note from The School Social Worker

**RESOURCE ROOM:** The resource room is a new addition to our school and was created to help our community alleviate any financial stressors that they are facing. We want all of our students to have access to some basic needs so they can engage in academic, social and play activities at school. This is available to the entire VHE community.



Families can put in one request per month using **this** form. Requests will be accepted until the school year ends or supplies run out. This program is made possible by the generosity of our community. Please request only what you need so we can help as many families as possible. There are no requirements or questions asked to access the resource room. Once you have completed the form, please allow one week to receive the supplies.

Information is confidential and not shared. School Social Worker, Amy Robel, manages the requests and the resource room.

## Support Our School Carnival!

Our annual VHE Carnival is just around the corner, and we need your help to make it a success!



## Raffle Donations Needed

We are seeking exciting raffle prizes to make this year's drawing the best one yet! Do you own/work for a business that might be interested in donating a raffle item? Do you have a close connection to someone who does? Help us make this a great event by donating a prize today!

Popular donation ideas include:

- Gift cards (restaurants, stores, entertainment)
- Event tickets (sports, concerts, museums)
- Unique experiences or services

If you or your business would like to contribute a raffle item, please contact Adam Gratch at [adamjgratch@gmail.com](mailto:adamjgratch@gmail.com) by March 15.

## Become a Carnival Sponsor!

Support our school while promoting your business! Sponsorships help fund carnival activities, prizes, and PTO programs. Choose a sponsorship level that works for you:

- Bronze Sponsor – \$250
- Silver Sponsor – \$500
- Gold Sponsor – \$1,000

Bronze - Silver - Gold sponsors will have their logo on day-of event signage with donation category listed

- Platinum Sponsor – \$2,000

Platinum Sponsors will receive their own day-of event thank you sign

To become a sponsor, please reach out to Adam Gratch by March 15. Thank you for supporting our students and community!



## Makers Fair Help Needed

We are looking for people to join our planning committee for the Makers Fair on April 26. Please email [prez@vanhisepto.org](mailto:prez@vanhisepto.org) for more information.

The second annual Makers Faire is an opportunity for Van Hise learners to make and create for free ... and to celebrate our staff!

We will have multiple creation stations throughout the gym to make gifts in preparation for staff appreciation. Join the committee to help pick the projects to make it a memorable and fun day!

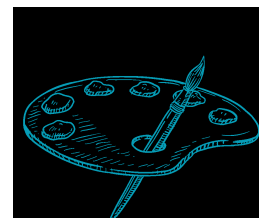
## Mr. Lynch's Art Room Update Sculpture Unit in Full Swing!

We have officially begun this year's sculpture unit, exploring everything from freeform building to stop-motion animation and even using our amazing new Chomp Saws—a kid-safe table saw for cardboard! I like to start with upcycled materials to encourage creativity and problem-solving before transitioning into clay.

- Grades K-3 kick off their clay unit with a Play Clay Day, allowing them to explore the material while reviewing procedures and cleanup.
- Grades 4-5 begin with a sculpture sketching day, planning out their ideas before diving into clay on their first build day.

We can't wait to see what incredible sculptures take shape in the coming weeks!

Stay tuned for more artistic adventures!



**Support the Kindergarten Post Office -  
Donate Stationery and Letter Writing Supplies!**  
Students can bring to the office or the kindergarten classrooms.

VHE's Annual Kindergarten-Ran Post Office is back!



For the entire month of February the kindergarten students will be running our VHE Post Office. All students, K-5, are encouraged to write a **kind** letter to a friend, sibling, or neighbor at VHE. It will be collected, stamped, sorted, and delivered by our amazing VHE Kindergarten Students. In order to make sure your special note gets delivered, address it with the recipient's name and their homeroom room number. Simply pop it in your homeroom teacher's outgoing mailbox and wait for it to get delivered. We always use lots of fun stationary this month so if you are willing to send some in for your child's classroom to use, we would appreciate it!



### Read Your Heart Out

VHE will be celebrating Read Your Heart Out next week on Friday 2/14. RYHO is an MMSD sponsored event in celebration of National African American Parent Involvement Day and Black History Month.

Family members, community members and volunteers who identify as African American/Black read books, recite poetry or connect with students through visual or oral storytelling in the classroom. [Please sign up using this link.](#)

### Families and Community Engagement

The Van Hise PTO hosted several meetings with the Families and Community Engagement (FACE) groups last year. This includes a series of teams, empowerment groups, open gyms and weekend events, adult clubs and classes, grade-level meet-ups, trainings and speakers.

We have an upcoming series of conversations scheduled for those interested to learn more about learning differences.

Parents and caregivers of kids with learning differences (ADHD, advanced learning, autism, dyslexia, or any other diagnosed learning disorders) face a specific, and sometimes isolating set of challenges to help our children succeed. All are welcome and we encourage those curious about resources and processes to attend as well.

There is an immense amount of knowledge, experience, and support that we can provide for one another, so... let's get together and chat about it!

This will be a great opportunity for parents and caregivers to share community resources, specific supports that have helped their children in and out of the classroom, and provide support to one another. We will also discuss alternative ways to support one another and the school throughout the year.

The meeting will begin with an MMSD leadership presentation and transition to a families and caregivers-only meeting to discuss, reflect, and engage with one another.

### **Special Ed 101 - IDEA, Evaluation Process, Tips for IEP Meetings**

Who: Anyone from the VHE community

Location: Van Hise Library Media Center and via Zoom

Day: Tuesday, March 18, 2025

Time: 6 pm

### **Mental Health Services - School and Community Supports**

Who: Anyone from the VHE community

Location: Van Hise Library Media Center and via Zoom

Day: Tuesday, April 22, 2025

Time: 6 pm

If you are interested in any of these empowerment groups or forming additional groups, **please let us know**. The groups will begin meeting again in the next few weeks.



## **AFTER SCHOOL CLASSES**

### **After School Classes**

**REMINDER:** If your student is attending after school classes, please send them with a snack.

Please share your feedback **here** so that we can continue to build upon what works and find ways to improve and make the program even better.

We are also looking for additional support! Please email [prez@vanhisepto.org](mailto:prez@vanhisepto.org) if you have capacity and interest to help with after school classes - including folks with legal or communications experience.

Spring class offerings and registration will be announced in March.

## **Volunteering**



If you haven't already, don't forget to verify that **your volunteer status is current**. The initial screening process includes some web-based training that takes time. Once approved, you need to renew your status each year. You must be approved by MMSD to volunteer in classrooms and to chaperone field trips, among other things.

There is a **new process for signing in at the office** this year. If you have a government issued ID, you must bring it with you the first time you sign-in via the new system.

Do you have friends or family in the neighborhood who might have extra time to give to the school? Encourage them to work through the volunteer process and **check our website** for opportunities to support Van Hise.

## Playground Volunteers



The PTO helps out with extra eyes and hands over the lunch period.

Consider volunteering for a 30-minute time slot. Volunteers check in at the office to receive a vest and volunteer badge.

Due to schedule changes this year, the lunch room volunteers are especially needed to help ease transition into and out of the lunch room - even just one shift makes a huge difference!

**Find Volunteer Opportunities for Lunch, Recess, and Other Events Here**

Our Van Hise Community and the Community at Large can donate native Wisconsin plants to our project of replanting the Playground Garden.

We will be replanting the Playground Garden (where the overgrown prairie was) into a Native/Pollinator Garden with a walking path.

The garden can be used during the school year for students to learn how plants grow and how pollinators help our plants.

We are hoping that in the future we can also work with the school librarian to create a book walk along the path that we are going

## Donate a Native Plant from the Plant Dane Plant Sale to the VHE Gardens!

The Van Hise PTO Garden Committee is looking to create a native pollinator and education garden at our Playground Garden.

The purpose of the garden is to learn about pollinators and plants and have a safe space to experience nature.

We'd like to invite you to donate plants to our Van Hise Gardens garden through the Plant Dane Native Plant Program. How?

- Visit <https://ripple-effects.com/Order/Donate>
- Select "Van Hise Elementary School-Madison"
- Select the number of plants you'd like to donate.

Plants cost \$3/each and must be ordered in multiples of 4.

**The deadline to donate to our project is March 18th .**

Thanks for helping to make our garden a reality!



to add in.

### Reminder of Upcoming Garden Dates

- Garden Committee Meeting: Wednesday, March 5th from 5 to 7PM in the LMC
- Garden Clean Up Day: Sunday, April 27th from 10AM to 1PM
- Garden Planting Day: Sunday, May 18th from 10AM to 1PM

## SHAKE SHACK

Our fifth Shake Shack restaurant night is coming up on **February 18!**

Head over to Shake Shack in Hilldale (558 N. Midvale Blvd.) all day. The PTO will receive 25% of all sales from 11AM to 9PM.

### VHE + Just Coffee Fundraiser!

Just Coffee Co-Op is a fair-trade, organic roasting cooperative in Madison.

Order a custom Hedgeie Brew, decaf or hot chocolate to stay warm this winter or gift to a teacher! All proceeds go towards the 5th grade graduation and trip. Thanks for supporting our 5th graders!

Please use **this form** to order coffee and hot chocolate by Tuesday, February 18th.



### Madtown Twisters Open Gym

March 8th 1-3:30PM

Sign up here by February 25th for an open gym fundraiser at Madtown Twisters 7035 Old Sauk Rd.



\$10 per child

Ages 7 & up can be dropped off after the waiver is signed and payment submitted.

One adult or guardian must remain on site for any child under 7.

*We're raising dough!*

## VAN HISE PTO

**25%**

OF NET SALES  
WILL BE  
DONATED\*

**March 4, 2025**  
**4:00 pm to 8:00 pm**  
**3416 University Avenue, Madison, WI**

Use code FUND4U at [panerabread.com](https://panerabread.com), in the Panera App, or at the kiosk in-cafe.

Online orders placed all day at your event cafe will count toward your total sales.

Bring this flyer or show a digital copy to your cashier when ordering at the cafe to ensure your organization gets a portion of the net sales.

**Panera**  
**FUNDRAISING**

\*20% fundraiser: Up to 20% of net sales from your designated and registered fundraising event will be donated to your approved organization. Minimum sales of \$100 on the specified date, time and location required to receive 20% donation. 25% fundraiser: Up to 25% of net sales from your designated and registered fundraising event will be donated to your approved organization. Minimum sales of \$150 on the specified date, time and location required to receive 25% donation. General terms: Details on percentage of net sales to be donated and the minimum sales requirement will be provided during the event registration process. Fundraising events available only at participating US bakery-cafes. Fundraising event details and available dates and times for fundraising events will vary by bakery-cafe. Gift card purchases, catering orders, and orders placed on third party delivery sites are excluded and will not count towards the total net sales from your designated fundraising event. This offer will be void if flyer is distributed in or near the participating bakery-cafe on the night of the event. Fundraising events may be cancelled without notice due to abuse, error, fraud, computer error, electronic or technical malfunctions, or other unforeseen or unintended circumstances. Other restrictions may apply. For more information on how our fundraising events work, please visit: <https://fundraising.panerabread.com/faq>. © 2024 Panera Bread. All Rights Reserved.



## Ollie's Labels

We want to reduce the items in Lost and Found this year and ensure your student's items make it back to them. Consider getting name labels from Ollie's Labels and VHE PTO receives 20% of every sale. This fundraiser is ongoing, and we will send reminders throughout the year.

**Order Labels**





You've reached the end. We hope to see you Tuesday, 2/11 at the PTO meeting! Check [www.vanhisepto.org](http://www.vanhisepto.org) for updates.

**VAN HISE** PTO   
ELEMENTARY



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