



DONATIONS MATCHED TODAY, 9/22

Give More 24, our community's day of giving is today. Gifts to the Foundation for VPS go directly to support VPS students: visit: www.givemore24.org.

MAKING AN IMPACT... Supporting student welfare and engagement



VPS Student Welfare & Truancy and IMPACT Programs focus on improving attendance, engagement, and truancy rates.

In schools across the nation, the need for student behavioral and mental health support is unlike anything seen before. Many students are facing challenges adjusting to changes in their learning environments, recovering from lack of social interaction, and in some cases, coping with instability in their home life that has been amplified by COVID and economic hardships. Suspension, truancy, and graduation rates reveal the results of these challenges.

Last spring the Foundation for VPS provided supplemental funding for two new VPS programs focused on improving attendance, engagement, and truancy rates. The Student Welfare & Truancy and IMPACT programs provide structure for students needing greater support and intervention for mental and behavioral health. Based on the success of the initiatives, the Foundation for VPS has increased funding support for the programs this school year to reach even more students.

The Student Welfare & Truancy Program expanded student engagement work to target severely and chronically absent students and support students in a proactive manner through interventions and incentives. VPS hired additional staff who are bilingual in Spanish and Chuukese, and expanded staffing hours to support students and keep them engaged during the summer break.

The IMPACT Program, an acronym for improvement, mind, pride, achievement, character and teamwork, is an alternative to exclusionary programs and provides support and resources to help students gain the coping skills to address issues negatively impacting their access to education.

Students in grades 6-12 who would be out of school due to behavior are provided with an alternate setting for learning to get a fresh start while working to get back on track so that they don't become credit deficient and at risk from not

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INSPIRING STUDENTS...PALs bring summer enrichment to Fruit Valley students

The Foundation for VPS provides funding throughout the year to offer students mentoring and enrichment opportunities for little or no cost. The ultimate goal is to increase engagement in learning, build confidence, and help connect them to their passions.

Last summer around 100 children participated in the Mad Science, STEAM, and forensics camps offered through the Police Activities League (PAL) of Southwest Washington. For the fifth year, the camps were hosted at Fruit Valley Elementary School and were open to all youth in the community, with first priority given to Fruit Valley students and siblings. This year was extra special because PAL was also able to offer ASL interpretation for Deaf students who wanted to attend camp.

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New: Community Impact Report



Our latest Community Impact Report highlights accomplishments made possible in the 2021-22 school year thanks to our dedicated community of supporters. From parents and teachers, to community partners and businesses, our community rallied together to address students' needs and enhance their educational experience.

Thanks to donors...

- Barriers to learning associated with poverty were removed so that students could come to school happy, healthy, and ready to learn.
- Students accessed engagement opportunities and connected with mentors to spark their interests, discover their passions, and envision their future.
- School communities were strengthened by family and community engagement activities.
- Early learning initiatives helped our youngest learners begin school ready to learn.
- Students benefited from access to mental health services.
- Students prepared for life after graduation.

And more...view our full report online: <https://foundationforvps.org/impact>

DONORS MAKING A DIFFERENCE...

"Write from the Start" sends students back to school ready to learn



THANK YOU to everyone who helped make our annual Write from the Start School Supply Drive a huge success! 20 community partners organized collection drives and donors gave over \$10,000, which was doubled thanks to a matching donation from Dick Hannah Dealerships! Thanks to our caring community, we were able to get students supplies to kick off the 2022-23 school year ready to learn!

Student welfare & engagement cont...

graduating. IMPACT engages the most at-risk students by providing a rigorous academic program that connects students through relevance to their lives and the development of strong relationships through powerful teaching and learning. The goal is to take students who have been disenfranchised from traditional school settings and support them in their efforts to re-engage in their own personal education and success in school and beyond.

Students in the program have been expelled for various reasons, but one characteristic they all have in common is their need for decision-making skills, and how to deal with frustration and anger. The program combats youth violence through broad-based partnerships with multiple education and service organizations to provide a "village" of support for holistic, individualized and differentiated instruction for youth offenders disciplined for acts of violence at school. Students get individualized attention from staff trained to address their unique needs, with a program tailored specifically to the individual student, including an art component, advocacy, Aggression Replacement Training (ART), and academic coursework.

IMPACT students are actively involved with designing, implementing and promoting the program to ensure that the intent and impact align. The program also includes resources and support for children and siblings of the IMPACT students as a prevention outreach that also promotes positive citizenship and service learning opportunities for participants.

With the two initiatives, VPS is shifting the culture from expelling students because of their behavior, to addressing the underlying causes with interventions. "VPS is developing programs that shower at risk kids with love, joy, and support and celebrates the gifts they have, rather than focus on negative behavior," said Elizabeth Mikaele, director of the District's student welfare and attendance department.

The Foundation for VPS continues to partner with the District to incorporate and elevate the voices of the students we serve. Addressing the student mental health and behavioral crisis is one critical component in ensuring all students have equitable access to education.

Police Activities League camp cont...

Camp organizers say youth participating in their programs typically show an increase in personal confidence, higher school attendance, less rates of discipline in the school, a greater sense of community, and stable/increased positive view of law enforcement. They also gain a positive adult in their lives and are reminded of their value and voice.

PAL arranged for representatives from five different local law enforcement agencies to visit the camps and work directly with the youth. All the activities are incredibly hands-on and keep children engaged and learning together for the three hours they are at camp. A favorite experience is when Pepa the therapy horse comes to visit. Pepa is a regular at the PAL camps, and was even on site in Summer 2020 when students picked up take home kits for their virtual camps. Pepa's owner Tyler Castle, of Castle Farms, says visiting PAL's camps are the highlight of his summer, "Pepa loves visiting with kids and it brings the team and me joy."

Ways to engage:

Save the date: Our Annual Luncheon is May 4, 2023. Interested in sponsorship? Contact us at 360-313-4734, foundationvans@vansd.org.

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