

# Vista Grande High School

February 14, 2008

Dear parents/guardians and supporters of VGHS students:

*This newsletter is given to students every week during the school year. Copies are also available in our main office and on our website at [vghs.org](http://vghs.org) (click on "VGHS Community" then "Newsletters").*

## **Upcoming Planned Events/Important Dates:**

February 18-19 Winter Break/Presidents' Day Holiday

February 19 We will be setting things up at Canon West. We will need some help (see below)

## **The Move to Canon West**

The anxiety of the moving delays has been difficult on staff as I am sure it has been on families. The good news is that the state building inspector has approved the facility and given us a certificate of occupancy. We are moving over to the new facility over the weekend and will have classes there starting on February 20. Your family's assistance is most welcome. The building is very clean and ready for occupancy. We need help assembling tables and shelves, hanging signs, stocking paper and soap products, cleaning up the outside sidewalks and parking areas. This kind of work will be going on Tuesday, February 19 from mid morning until the afternoon.

## **Cell Phones and Portable Electronic Devices**

Students have been recently reminded that cell phones are not to be at school. Ringing and/or buzzing phones are deeply distracting to all students at VGHS and we appreciate parent and family support in this matter. If you need to contact your student please call our main number (758-5100) and ask to have a message passed onto your student.

## **Board Games Donations**

Do you have any old games at home that your family no longer enjoys? If they are in usable condition and are appropriate for teenagers feel free to come by and drop them off at school. We hope to use them during lunch times.

## **Substitute Teaching**

We need to create a pool of substitute teachers from which to draw. To get certified as a sub requires getting fingerprints done at the sheriff's office and observing in classrooms for a part of a day. We would be happy to help anyone to get this process completed. If you have daytime availability and are interested in substituting for teachers when they are ill or away please contact Christine Torrez at 758-5100. You can schedule a time to come in and observe and pick up a fingerprint card.

## **Spring Expedition**

Can changing a light bulb change the world? This is the title of our spring Learning Expedition. Students will spend the next two weeks building skills in preparation for the expedition. Beginning January 28 students will begin to create their products for the expedition. They will write a piece of speculative fiction, create models of energy efficient building designs, learning to create an energy audit for a home or building, promote and/or sell compact fluorescent light bulbs and renewable energy blocks, record radio spots, write articles for an on line magazine (E-

Zine) and more all in preparation for an Energy Summit in our facility on May 15 (mark your calendar)

### **Fundraising/Open House/Student Recruitment**

In a previous letter to families I described a plan by a subcommittee of our board to put together a fund raising event in March. This planning effort has experienced a setback in that the board has been overburdened with site expansion planning, budget responses, and other critical and time consuming matters. Our need for additional funding is critical yet little time has been available to complete the necessary planning. We have decided that, lacking the means to put together a fundraiser, we will not have an event this school year. We will conduct one next year so if you have already secured donations let us know and we will be able to use them then.

In the meantime we are planning an open house for the middle of March. This will also serve as a recognition event to those who have been supportive of our efforts and as an enrollment time for new students. We ask that if you have anything to contribute in this area to contact VGHS at 758-5100. If you know any 8<sup>th</sup> graders please let them know that they can register at VGHS any time but are most welcome to come to this event. I will let you know the date in the next letter home.

### **Computer Usage at School and at Home**

By now you should have received a copy of the information you need to insure your student's computer when it is away from school. Once insurance is acquired and s/he gets an OK from our technology coordinator (Brenda Peterson) your student will be able to take his/her computer home.

### **Lunches**

Remember that you can pay for your student's meals in advance. Checks should be written to TMS. This makes it easier on us (and on you since you can pay many days early and you get a free meal for each two weeks you pay early). Students can pay their first period teacher when lunch counts are made. If you do not wish to participate in the school lunch program make sure your student comes to school with a meal to eat. Lunches from home are much more nutritious than purchased fast food and cost less than these unhealthy alternatives.

### **Parent Involvement**

We need the help of parents in many ways. We are a small staff with so much to do. We are not well funded and need to raise more funds to support our ambitious plans. Your energy and passion is needed! You may be contacted soon to ask if you can help during the week answering phones, distributing lunches, tutoring during lunchtime or after school. Thanks for considering our request.

### **Tutoring and Afternoon Electives**

Tutoring is still available each Monday, Wednesday and Friday starting at 2:30pm. At times we may require your student to remain after school to complete important assignments. We will notify you in advance either by phone or with a note home.

### **Afternoon Electives**

Our afternoon electives program will continue on Tuesdays and Thursdays for the next 6 weeks. After that we will have a final session of electives for 8 more weeks. All students at VGHS are required to take 2 electives each year. We think it is important to give students something productive and interesting to do during the afternoons

Thanks, Greg Perry