

# Tanagers' Nest News



## Semester 2 - It's All Downhill From Here!

by **Jon Frey** on January 9 2023



Hmmm ... where is the year going? It is remarkable to consider how quickly the days and weeks seem to go by. I was just writing the first of these newsletters *the other day*, it seems and here we are and it's January, 2023!

While the students begin a second semester of classes at VHS, we forge ahead with the busy life of the school. We are moving quickly through the winter activities season with everything from show choir to basketball, one-act play to gymnastics - all well underway.

In Student Services, dual credit enrollments, university and technical college applications as well as scholarship opportunities are being discussed and reviewed daily. Preparations are underway for 2023-24 registration and spring state assessments (juniors) as well as senior awards day and graduation!

There is so much going on daily at VHS that makes it a very exciting place to work! I hope each of you had a restful and joyful holiday break and as we push into the second semester, I hope you will reach out if there is anything we can do to assist you or your student(s) in the coming year.

*Jon*



### IN THIS MONTH'S TANAGERS' NEST NEWS

**Click on the titles below to move directly to the article.**

<b>Semester 2 - It's All Downhill From Here!</b>	<b>1</b>
Lunchtime Solutions Seeks Your Input	2
Teacher Feature!	2
Todd Stephens - English Teacher	2
Building Trades Construction Project: 2022-23	3
Important Upcoming Dates	4

# Tanagers' Nest News

	2
Native American Students Advisory	5
<b>Activities News</b>	5
Gymnastics Invitational Renamed to Honor Hall of Fame Coach	6
<b>Student Services News</b>	7
Registration for 2023-24	7
Need a Tutor? How about a FREE Tutor?	7
Dual Credit Courses	8
Scholarships	8
Student Services Important Reminders	8
FAFSA	9
What are the deadlines for filling out the FAFSA form?	9

## Lunchtime Solutions Seeks Your Input

by **Jon Frey** on January 11, 2023



The time is now if you would like to provide feedback to our school lunch provider, Lunchtime Solutions. There is a brief survey on [this link](#). Please consider taking a few minutes to offer your thoughts and opinions regarding the breakfast and lunch options available to your student(s) at Vermillion High School!

Thank you for taking the time!

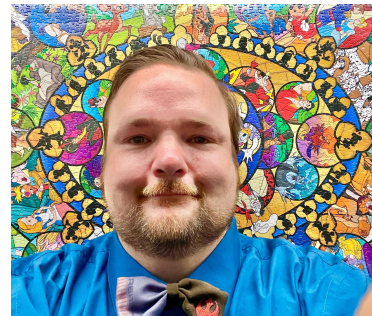
## Teacher Feature!

By **Todd Stephens - VHS Teacher** on January 11, 2023

This month, we feature Todd Stephens, a new face in our Special Education department. Mr. Stephens came to VHS this year, returning another VHS alumnus to the fold!

### Todd Stephens - English Teacher

**Where is home?** Vermillion, SD; but lived in Spirit Lake, IA; Spokane, Washington, and Okinawa, Japan



**Where did you get your (post-HS) education?** University of South Dakota

# Tanagers' Nest News

**How many years have you been teaching at VHS? Overall?** 1st year as a teacher and had been a ParaPro for 3 year previously

**What classes do you teach?** Special Education, Life Skills Math.

**Did you always want to teach or did something lead to you teaching after first doing something else?** I started out as a music major wanting to do Music Therapy to help people with disabilities. Got my Journalism degree with a minor in music and then was working as a Para Professional here at VHS. I was told by my lead teacher that I was great with the students that had disabilities and encouraged me to go back for my SPED degree. It wasn't until I got a note from a student saying thank you for being there for them and always encouraging them to do their best that I decided to go back and get my masters in SPED.

**Do you coach any sports? Do you sponsor any activities or clubs?** no and no.

**What is your favorite part of teaching at VHS? The students.** Every day is a new day and seeing students get that "ah-ha" moment is amazing.

**Anything else?** I am a movie buff. I have over 1500 movies at home. I love to travel. I have been to England, Mexico, Japan, Switzerland, Italy, and France. I have two dogs. Wicket and Link. One of my older sisters lives with me. She had a few strokes these past few years. As a family, we decided to have her live in town (Vermillion) with me so that if something were to happen she is closer to the hospital. My other sister works at the Middle school as a ParaPro and my mother lives in Burbank, SD.

Even though I lived in Japan I can not speak Japanese. I was very young when I lived there. My father was in the Air Force so we got stationed in Okinawa in the 80s. I have also worked at Walt Disney World for about 5 years. I worked at Epcot, Animal Kingdom, and Pop Century Resort.

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## Building Trades Construction Project: 2022-23

by **Jon Frey & Mark Neitzke** on December 18, 2022

Vermillion High School's Building Trades class has, in recent years, tackled projects from a car port for district vehicles, a storage building for equipment and even partnered with local home builders to build residential homes for Vermillion families. These students spend a double class period learning the valuable skills of basic construction as well as observing subcontractors such as plumbers and electricians.

# Tanagers' Nest News

4



Building Trades class helps students gain an understanding and appreciation of the skills necessary in the various building trades. It is a hands-on experience that many students will point to as the class that helped them make a decision to enter a

related career field.



This year, the Building Trades students are not building a residential home, but rather scaling back their projects to garden/yard storage buildings. The class is set up so that several buildings are built at once and then sold to community members, once complete.

Mark Neitzke is in his second year as the VHS Career & Technical Education (CTE) - Building Trades instructor.

## Important Upcoming Dates

- January 16 - **No School**, **MLK National Holiday**
- January 25 - Native American Drum Group Performance - 10:30am, VHS Auditorium
- February 16th & 17th - **Spring Parent-Teacher Conferences**
- March 15, 2022 - **1:30 Dismissal** - Teacher Professional Learning Teams
- March 16th & 17th - **No School**, Spring Break
- April 6th - **1:30 Dismissal** - Teacher Professional Learning Teams
- April 7th - **No School**, Easter Holiday
- April 10th - **No School**, Easter Holiday
- May 3rd - Senior Awards Ceremony, 2:00pm, VHS Auditorium
- May 8th & 9th - Senior Final Exams
- May 10th - Baccalaureate Service for Seniors (*optional*), 7:00pm, VHS Auditorium
- May 11th - Graduation Practice (MANDATORY ATTENDANCE), 10:00am, USD Sanford Coyote Sports Center
- May 13th - Graduation 1:30pm, USD Sanford Coyote Sports Center (Doors open: 12:30pm)
- May 17th - Final Exams (Grades 9-11)



# Tanager's Nest News

- May 18th - Final Exams (Grades 9-11)
- May 19th - Final Exams (Grades 9-11) / Final Check-out / Last Day of School

## Native American Students Advisory

by **Jan Stalling, EdD, NCC, NCSC Native American Liaison** on January 10, 2023

The parents of Native American Students Advisory Group will meet on Wednesday, January 18, 2023, at the Native American Cultural Center, 411 E. Clark St., Vermillion, SD. We will meet from 5:30 PM to 6:00 PM. Please bring ideas for connecting students to one another and to the community of Vermillion, SD. Also, at this meeting we will discuss the upcoming Drum Group presentation scheduled for the Middle School and High School on Wednesday, January 25, 2023. The presentation at the Middle School will be from 9:30 AM to 10:00 AM and the program will be at the High School from 10:30 to 11:00 AM. We had tried to schedule this program in November during the National Native American Heritage Month. However, due to scheduling conflicts, we were unable to have the program during that time. Parents are welcome to attend either program.

It is my understanding that prior to Covid, there would be a Harvest Meal scheduled during the fall also. Again, due to time constraints, the meal was unable to be held. With your help, I would like to schedule a “belated” Harvest Meal or a meal to either share during the Winter or to look forward to the Spring. I am open to your thoughtful ideas.

We look forward to sharing the time together and to discuss your thoughts and ways to best serve the students in the Vermillion School District.

Jan Stalling, EdD, NCC, NCSC

Native American Liaison

Vermillion School District

Vermillion, SD 57069 Email: [janice.stalling@k12.sd.us](mailto:janice.stalling@k12.sd.us)

Phone: 605-659-8517



# Tanagers' Nest News

6

## Activities News

### Gymnastics Invitational Renamed to Honor Hall of Fame Coach



by [Jason Huska](#) on December 16, 2022

Long time Hall of Fame coach Mark Upward was honored along with his family for the renaming of our popular gymnastics invite. The new name is now “The Upward Winter Wonderland Invitational”. Mark Upward started this event in 1999. He and his family made a tradition by making decorations, awards, and fun competitions for all competitors. This has been a popular invite throughout the State. Countless hours have been spent to make this great event happen each year. Coach Upward and his family are very deserving of this honor.

# Tanagers' Nest News

We look forward to seeing everyone out at the various events. Best of luck to all and  
GO, TANAGERS!



Vermillion High School Student Services Office 605.659.8513 (ph) / 605.677.7042 (fax)  
Luke Hayes, School Counselor (A-K) - Laura Suing, School Counselor (L-Z)  
Rebecca Olson, Administrative Assistant

## Student Services News

By [Luke Hayes & Laura Suing](#) on December 18, 2022

### Registration for 2023-24

Discussions are underway with staff and departments at the high school regarding course offerings for the 2023-24 school year. Next month's newsletter will have dates for planned grade level meetings regarding registration for classes for next year.

Everything you will need to know for student registration for classes next year will be in this area of upcoming newsletters beginning *next month!*



### Need a Tutor? How about a FREE Tutor?

The [Dakota Dreams Online Tutoring Program](#) provides free online tutoring to K-12 students in South Dakota in the subjects of English/Language Arts, Math, Science, and Social Studies. Parents can register students for virtual one-on-one tutoring sessions using a simple and secure online platform.

Vermillion High School Administration 605.677.7035 (ph) / 605.677.7042 (fax)  
Jon Frey, Principal ~ Jennifer Badke, Administrative Assistant  
Jason Huska, Assistant Principal / Activities Director ~ Jasmine Stewart, Administrative Assistant



# Tanager's Nest News

8

Once registered, sessions can either be pre-scheduled or accessed on-demand. All sessions are taught by university students already accepted into the School of Education at Northern State University or Black Hills State University.

## Dual Credit Courses

Spring Dual Credit registration opens November 1st-December 20th (see Mr. Hayes).

Stay current with your course work and communicate with your instructor if you have questions or fall behind. Reach out to dual credit advisors with any concerns or questions if you are in need of help.

## Scholarships

Scholarships are now available. Make sure to have your student stop into Student Services or check his/her/their email for more information.

## Student Services Important Reminders

### ACT TESTING 2022|2023

TEST DATES	REGISTRATION DEADLINES		
	Regular Deadline	Late Deadline	Photo Upload Standby Deadline
<b>September 10, 2022</b>	<b>August 5</b>	August 19	September 2
<b>October 22, 2022</b>	<b>September 16</b>	September 30	October 14
<b>December 10, 2022</b>	<b>November 4</b>	November 11	December 2
<b>February 11, 2023</b>	<b>January 6</b>	January 20	February 3
<b>April 15, 2023</b>	<b>March 10</b>	March 24	April 7
<b>June 10, 2023</b>	<b>May 5</b>	May 19	June 2
<b>July 15, 2023*</b>	<b>June 16</b>	June 23	July 7

### FAFSA

The 2023-2024 Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) will be available October 1, 2022. FAFSA can provide your student with grants, loans, and work study funds from the Federal Government. It is best to get it done early since some of the funds are available on a



# Tanagers' Nest News



first come first served basis. For a short video on how to fill out the FAFSA form, please click [here](#). To fill out your FAFSA form, please visit [the FAFSA website](#).

## What are the deadlines for filling out the FAFSA form?

To be considered for federal student aid for the 2023-24 award year, you can complete a Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) form between Oct. 1, 2022, and 11:59 p.m. Central time (CT) on June 30, 2023.

Any FAFSA form corrections or updates must be submitted by 11:59 p.m. CT on Sept. 10, 2023. However, many states and colleges have earlier deadlines for applying for state and institutional financial aid, use Find your state's deadline. Check with your college or career school about its deadlines. Because of the variation in state and college deadlines, it's highly recommended that you fill out the FAFSA form as soon as you can after Oct. 1 to ensure that you don't miss out on available aid.<sup>1</sup>

[READ MORE ON OUR WEBSITE](#)

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## Vermillion High School

1001 East Main Street, Vermillion, SD, 57069  
605-677-7035

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<sup>1</sup> Federal Student Aid Website, Office of Department of Education, Accessed June 28, 2022.

# VERMILLION TRIVIA NIGHT

VERMILLION  
BUCKS FOR 1ST  
AND 2ND PLACE!

Friday, February 10th

7:00 pm - 10:00 pm

The Varsity Pub

\$10 per person - teams up to 6 allowed

Vermillion Themed Trivia

Ticket includes one drink ticket and snacks!

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HOSTED BY THE VERMILLION AREA COMMUNITY FOUNDATION

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Scan to learn about VACF!