

# COMMUNITY NEWS

News & Events for the City of Vestavia Hills • April 2021

A joint publication of the City of Vestavia Hills, Vestavia Hills City Schools & Vestavia Hills Chamber of Commerce



## PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE

Jeff Downes, Vestavia Hills City Manager

As I have written in the last several months, the City of Vestavia Hills strives to be as open and inclusive as possible in its decision-making process, offering hybrid public meetings, surveys, lunch and learn events, etc. Participation in this process results in a game plan that reflects the collective will of all participants. Our City Council recently conducted a two-day strategic planning session. Consideration of input from City staff, in conjunction with community feedback, resulted in numerous ideas and tactics that will hopefully be implemented over the next 12 months.

Some of the general ideas include: continue emphasis on public safety investments to further enhance our Police and Fire departments, both of which receive high marks from those inside and outside our City; continue infrastructure improvements that make our traveling experience positive; manage public stormwater concerns; and rally behind the much-anticipated recreational facility improvements with a focus on trails, sidewalks and enhanced programming to fully utilize these assets. Furthermore, we need to be conscious of the continued needs of our stellar school system, make continuous improvement to sanitation services and explore opportunities to polish up “appearance” items, such as holiday decorations.

Embracing these general themes and crafting specific, achievable action items are the hallmark of our planning process in Vestavia Hills. Over the next 12 months, the following objectives will be acted upon and some considered for formal acceptance by the City Council:

### Public Safety

- Additional Police Officers will be hired to staff newly planned patrol beats with the goal of improved response times throughout the entire City of Vestavia Hills
- Enhanced training facilities and programs for the Police and Fire departments
- Delivery and implementation of a new ambulance/rescue unit along with improved firefighting equipment

### Infrastructure

- Implementation of sidewalk projects and a refresh of our existing sidewalk plan
- Focus on three much needed traffic improvement projects at problematic intersections
- Review street lighting issues and opportunities for improvement
- Expedite and increase the number of residential streets planned for resurfacing

### Recreation

- Explore and plan trail opportunities at Altadena Valley Park
- Place emphasis on planning and utilization of public green space
- Evaluate needs to cap off the recreational asset improvements in the closing phase of the Community Spaces Plan

### Miscellaneous

- Explore and plan improvements to holiday decorations
- Implement adjustments to the Wednesday/Saturday sanitation routes
- Develop and act upon strategies to improve the appearance of the Highway 31 business corridor

## COMMUNITY CALENDAR

The events and dates provided are subject to change. Please refer to the calendar on the City of Vestavia Hills website at <https://vhal.org/calendar> for the most up-to-date information.

### April 2021

- 1 Design Review Board,**  
Executive Conference Room,  
6 p.m.
- 2 Municipal Offices Closed**  
in observance of Good Friday\*
- 4 Easter**
- 8 Planning & Zoning Commission,** Council Chamber, 6 p.m.
- 12 City Council Meeting,** Council Chamber, 6 p.m.
- 13 Chamber Luncheon,** Zoom, 12 p.m.
- 15 Board of Zoning Adjustment,** Council Chamber, 6 p.m.
- 19 Council Work Session,** Executive Conference Room, 6 p.m.
- 24 Wing Ding,** Lawn at City Hall, 4 p.m.
- 26 City Council Meeting,** Council Chamber, 6 p.m.

*\*This is NOT a trash holiday; residential garbage will be collected as normal.*



## MAYOR'S MESSAGE

Ashley Curry, Vestavia Hills Mayor

I think spring is officially here! During late February and early March, we had temperatures in the teens one week and 70° weather the next.

With April showers and May flowers ahead of us, spring is certainly on its way, even if Groundhog Day predicated six more weeks of winter. With the completion of many of our recreational parks, I hope that you will be able to enjoy the outdoors this spring.

This month is National Volunteer Appreciation month. April became National Volunteer Month as part of President George H. W. Bush's "1000 Points of Light" campaign in 1991. Volunteers come in all shapes and sizes. They pick a cause and make a difference in their communities or someone's life. Sometimes the difference is a drop in the bucket. Other times it creates a tidal wave of change.

Most recently we saw many volunteers assisting the city of Fultondale in the aftermath of a tornado and other volunteers delivering bottled water to numerous cities in north Alabama that lost their water sources. From the anonymous volunteers who donate their resources to those whose efforts are part of larger national organizations, such as Boy and Girl Scouts of America or American Red Cross, their missions provide valuable support to communities.

An unknown author stated, "Volunteering is the ultimate exercise in democracy. You may vote in elections once a year, but when you volunteer, you vote every day about the kind of community you want to live in."

Vestavia Hills is blessed to have many volunteers – in our rec sports leagues, garden clubs, foundations, PTOs, library, plus numerous others. I thank the many volunteers who make a positive difference in our community by donating their time and talents to worthy causes. Our volunteers contribute significantly to our quality of life and make Vestavia Hills a great place to live.

In addition to our volunteers, I want to recognize two of our elected officials that assisted our city on several important issues. Senator James "Jabo" Waggoner, a long-time Vestavia Hills resident, assisted me in protecting our city's authority to regulate the sale of fireworks in Vestavia Hills. A current bill in the State Legislature would have taken away our authority on this matter. Also, Congressman Gary Palmer, along with Senator Waggoner and our City Council, assisted me in acquiring COVID-19 vaccinations for some of our senior citizens in independent living facilities.

I am optimistic that we will all be reenergized and reinvigorated this spring. Spend some time soaking up the fresh air and sunshine outdoors and, if you are so inclined, I hope you will consider volunteering your time or resources.

## PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE

– Continued from page 1

While this is not an all-inclusive, fully detailed list of plans to continuously improve City services, it should provide an overview of what is anticipated over the next few months. We have many blessings and things to be pleased with in our city; however, we always want to ensure we are not adopting a status quo vision of what we could be. An aspirational spirit is the operative tone of this plan. Thanks to everyone who has participated when asked to do so. Enjoy your spring activities and let's look forward to our future endeavors.

### VESTAVIA HILLS DOGWOOD LUNCHEON



**Make plans to join us for the annual Vestavia Hills**

**Dogwood Luncheon Wednesday, May 12, 2021 at Vestavia Country Club.**

There will be a silent auction beginning at 10:30 a.m., followed by lunch and a fashion show featuring spring fashions for all ages presented by various Vestavia Hills clothing merchants. Tickets are \$30 and must be purchased in advance. The deadline to purchase is May 5, 2021, so purchase your ticket today at <https://2021vestaviahillsdogwoodluncheon.eventbrite.com> or call 205.978.0100 for more information. Luncheon details are also on the Vestavia Hills Beautification Facebook page.

### SPRING YARD JUDGING

Vestavia Hills Beautification Board members will conduct the annual Spring Yard Judging April 5-12, 2021. Yards will be judged on their appearance and how well they are maintained. Winners in each area will receive a certificate of appreciation from Mayor Ashley Curry and will host a "Winning Yard" sign until the end of the month. We look forward to seeing the beautiful yards and blooms in our city!



Ask a child what he dreams of doing in the future. His answer brings everything into focus for us.

WE DO WHAT WE DO  
BECAUSE CHILDREN HAVE DREAMS.



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BIRMINGHAM, AL 35233  
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## SUPERINTENDENT'S MESSAGE

Todd Freeman, Ed.D., Vestavia Hills City Schools Superintendent

One of the simple treasures for a parent is to watch the face of a child light up when they read.

In our home, our boys are typically reading about the shenanigans of Junie B. Jones, which animal is the strongest or the intricacies of how a little shepherd boy could defeat a giant. The busyness and stresses of life often disappear in a moment when I see how excited and inquisitive my children become when they read.

Reading is the cornerstone of academic success. It is the gateway to the path of knowledge that begins in early ages. Children benefit most from language rich environments, at home and school. As a father and superintendent, I am thrilled at the expertise of our teachers in developing avid readers. I'm also mindful that the skill of reading does not come easily for every child. While we have many students who thrive, there are those who struggle with reading or even a desire to read. The goal in VHCS is to challenge every student, no matter what level they are as readers.

Students learn to read in early elementary school and spend the rest of their lives reading to learn. Elementary teachers, reading coaches and instructional interventionists in VHCS use a multitude of focused strategies, assessments and materials to teach reading. They pore over data for every student to be informed of how to strengthen students' fluency and comprehension. They are also vigilant in learning about the science of reading, phonics, multisensory language structures and strategies for students with dyslexia.

Effective teaching of reading persuades and energizes students to learn at a profound level. Our teachers are constantly engaging students with stories of heroes and heroines, historical events, overcoming adversity and appreciating the melting pot of America. Students engage in rich conversation of nonfiction writing, use technology in creative ways to explain classical literature or a myriad of other activities. This sets the foundation to make printed words jump off the page and into the hearts and minds of our students.

While this year has not allowed parents to see firsthand the great work taking place inside our schools, I have had the privilege of observing classes where teachers are challenging students through engaging and meaningful reading. I can say confidently that our teachers continue to have high expectations for every student. That is the 50-year formula that has grown excellent readers and lifelong learners in Vestavia Hills.

## PARKS & RECREATION

### AQUATIC COMPLEX

**2021 Aquatic Complex summer memberships on sale April 26, 2021!**

For more info, visit <https://vhal.org/parks-facilities>.

- \$75 individual (0-54yo)
- \$35 senior adult (55+)
- \$300 family maximum
- \$10 daily guest pass (*Guests must be accompanied by a member.*)

Aquatic Complex membership is open to Vestavia Hills residents only. A current driver's license or other state-issued photo identification is required for proof of residency. If your I.D. does not list your current Vestavia Hills address, you may present your photo I.D. along with a current utility bill bearing your name and accurate address.

### Now hiring summer lifeguards!

Training classes available. For more information or to apply, visit <https://vhal.org/lifeguards>.





Vestavia Belles  
2021-2022



Elizabeth Ann Burton



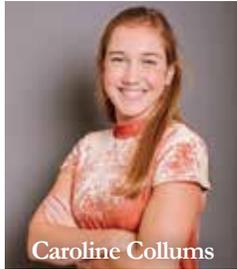
Jamie Casey



Catherine Cassimus



Molly Coleman



Caroline Collums



Madison Daniel



Alex Downes



Ava Garner



Sara Frances Gilroy



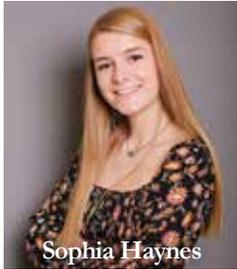
Lauren Hardy



Zoe Harris



Caroline Hawkins



Sophia Haynes



Meredith Hogland



Arden Hudson



Isabelle Jackson



Laura Catherine Jackson



Ella James



Campbell Johnston



Kate Kaiser



Meredith Largent



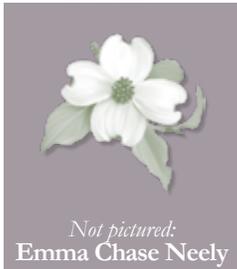
Mary Lillian Leigh



Kate Leyden



Emma Miller



Not pictured:  
Emma Chase Neely



Bella Nixon



Sarah Jane Richardson



Abby Robicheaux



Lucy Rumbley



Abby Saia



Macy Stoffregen



Libby Tunnell



Olivia Turner



Amira Walton



Lotte Wambsgans

As I write this letter, we have just heard the update from Governor Kay Ivey regarding the reopening of our businesses. While this has been a painful time for everyone, we appreciate and understand the hard decisions that have to be made by our elected officials and healthcare experts. With vaccines being available and a projected date to return to full capacity, we want to encourage folks to support our local businesses. They have struggled mightily over the last year and I hope we will all do our part in making sure they remain viable for the long run.

We have multiple upcoming events city-wide. Please make note of these dates and be part of making Vestavia Hills a great place to live, work and play:

This year's **Mayor's Prayer Breakfast** is scheduled for August 24, 2021. As you know, last year's event had to be canceled, but Brodie Croyle has once again agreed to be our keynote speaker. Croyle serves as Executive Director of the Big Oak Ranch, taking over from his father, John Croyle. The Big Oak ministry grew out of the desire to give hurting children a chance. Four promises are made to every child that comes to the Ranch: 1) We love you; 2) We will never lie to you; 3) We will stick with you until you're grown; and 4) There are boundaries, don't cross them. They operate on the philosophy that "A hundred years from now it will not matter what kind of house we lived in, the kind of car we drove or how much money we had in the bank, but the world may be different because you and I were important in the life of a child." Big Oak Ranch and the Croyles are truly making a difference with these children. More information will be available soon.

We have had **ribbon cuttings** this year for BackYard Market on Highway 31, as well as Altadena Eye Care & Dr. Amy Herrington at Dolly Creek Station. Please join us in welcoming these businesses to Vestavia Hills. We also have several upcoming ribbon cuttings and we would love to have you join us to celebrate these new developments. We will be co-hosting a ribbon cutting for TrustCare on Highway 31 on March 11; co-hosting a ribbon cutting at the new Taco Mama at City Center (date TBD); co-hosting a ribbon cutting and grand opening for SouthPoint at Liberty Park on June 17. We are delighted that these businesses have opened in Vestavia Hills, so please stop by and welcome them to Vestavia Hills. Be sure to check the Community Calendar on our website for additional ribbon cuttings, as well as other community events.

**Helping Hands Day** is scheduled for September 11, 2021 and will also include our shredding, e-recycle, hazardous waste disposal and medication take-back. Please make note of the date and be on the lookout for additional information.

We are excited to welcome back the **I Love America** celebration. Not only did we have to cancel last year's event due to the pandemic, but the construction at Wald Park impacted it as well. We are thrilled to be back "home" at Wald Park to celebrate our community and America on June 24. We are also planning a **ribbon cutting and grand opening** for the Grand Lawn at the Park on this same date. This will truly be a fun celebration that offers something for everyone! We look forward to sharing more about this celebration in future newsletters.

As always, feel free to drop by and visit or email us thoughts on ideas you may have as we work together for "A Life Above."

## FIREFIGHTER SPOTLIGHT: PIERSON PADDOCK



Pierson Paddock is a 24-year-old firefighter/paramedic that has worked at the Vestavia Hills Fire Department since January 1, 2018. He is currently assigned to Station 5 in Cahaba Heights, is a member of the Heavy Rescue team and has been married to Ashley since November 2018.

- 1. Why did you get in the fire service?** I grew up with family members that were in the fire service. My grandfather worked for Birmingham Fire and Rescue, and I had two uncles that worked for departments in the Birmingham metro area.
- 2. What is one of your biggest accomplishments in the fire service so far?** Becoming a Smoke Diver. This is a very intense week-long class that pushes you to your limits both physically

and mentally in your firefighting gear and SCBA. It was a very rewarding feeling completing the class at the Alabama Fire College.

- 3. What do you like about the fire service in general?** I enjoy making people smile after they call 911 and we respond to help them in their time of emergency. I also enjoy the friendships and camaraderie that comes with the job. You spend 24 hours at a time with your crew, and the friendships you make don't end when you leave at the end of the shift.
- 4. What are your hobbies/interests outside of your job?** My wife and I enjoy trying different local restaurants and foods. We also enjoy going to Birmingham Barons games. One other interest we have is trying different coffees and making our own specialty coffee. I hope to open my own coffee shop one day.
- 5. Alabama or Auburn?** Alabama

# UPCOMING events

## APRIL 2021

**Children** (Birth-Gr. 1) | **Tweens** (Gr. 2-5) | **Teens** (Gr. 6-12)  
**Adults** (Ages 18+) | **Tech** (Ages 18+) | **Makerspace** (All ages, unless noted)

**ALL PROGRAMS & EVENTS ARE ONLINE ONLY.**  
Additional information, including online location and registration requirements, is available at [www.vestavialibrary.org/event-calendar](http://www.vestavialibrary.org/event-calendar).

- 1 **Tara's Creative Corner: Spring Art**, 3pm, YouTube  
**Chess Club**, 4pm, Zoom  
**Read & Feed Book Group: The Invisible Life of Addie LaRue**, 6pm, Zoom



- 2 **Easter Egg-stravaganza**, All Day, Library Website  
**What's It?**, 2pm, YouTube  
**Open Gaming Goes Online**, 4pm, Discord



- 6 **Storytime Stars**, 10:30am, YouTube  
**Earth Day Virtual Tour: Auroras**, 12pm, Online  
**Smash Bits!**, 4pm, YouTube
- 7 **Writing Group**, 4pm, Zoom
- 8 **Tic-TECH-Toe: Using Your Library's Online Catalog**, 4pm, YouTube
- 9 **Book Talks with Pet Pals of Librarians**, 2pm, YouTube  
**Open Gaming Goes Online**, 4pm, Discord

- 13 **Earth Day Virtual Tour: Rafting the Colorado River**, 12pm, Online  
**Picking Up S.T.E.A.M!**, 2pm, YouTube  
**Teen Librarians Take on TikTok**, 4pm, YouTube



- 14 **Among Us**, 4pm, Discord
- 16 **What's It?**, 2pm, YouTube  
**Open Gaming Goes Online**, 4pm, Discord
- 20 **Storytime Stars**, 10:30am, YouTube  
**Earth Day Virtual Tour: The Great Barrier Reef – Australia**, 12pm, Online  
**Kara Recommends: A Woman Is No Man**, 3pm, YouTube  
**Lauren's Book Buzz**, 4pm, YouTube

- 21 **Search Engine Sleuth**, 4pm, Zoom
- 22 **Earth Day Seed Bomb Take & Grow Kit**, All Day  
**Tech in Ten: Windows 10 Basics Part 1**, 4pm, YouTube
- 23 **Making Memories**, 2pm, YouTube  
**Book Talks with Pet Pals of Librarians**, 2pm, YouTube  
**Open Gaming Goes Online**, 4pm, Discord
- 27 **Earth Day Virtual Tour: The ABCs from Space**, 12pm, Online  
**12 Bel'w**, 2pm, YouTube  
**Doodles with Derek: Obscure Greetings**, 4pm, YouTube
- 28 **Art Group**, 4pm, Zoom
- 30 **What's It?**, 2pm, YouTube  
**Open Gaming Goes Online**, 4pm, Discord



Celebrate your favorite library this spring with a gift to the Vestavia Hills Library Foundation. Your contribution supports the future of the library for decades to come!

**Donate today at [www.vhlibraryfoundation.org](http://www.vhlibraryfoundation.org).**

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**VESTAVIA HILLS**  
LIBRARY IN THE FOREST

## PROGRAM DESCRIPTIONS

**12 Bel<sup>o</sup>w** Features trivia, games, challenges and activities online for school-aged children.

**Among Us** Join us on Discord and see if you can figure out who the impostor is or fool all of your friends! Link available at [vestavialibrary.org/event-calendar](http://vestavialibrary.org/event-calendar).

**Art Group** Enjoy drawing, sketching or doodling? Play drawing games, like Drawful 2, or learn basic drawing exercises you can do at home.

**Book Talks with Pet Pals of Librarians** Watch our librarian's pets talk about their favorite book this week!

**Chess Club** Join one of your peers – a decorated chess champ – and learn to play or challenge other veterans! For students grade 6-12 only (no adults).

**Doodles with Derek: Obscure Greetings** It's a celebration! Join Derek as he sketches greeting cards for some national, obscure holidays that occur on April 27.

**Earth Day Seed Bomb Take & Grow Kit** Show our earth some love with this easy, DIY seed bomb kit. Spread flowers and help bees thrive. Supplies are limited. Call 205.978.4678 or email [terri.leslie@vestavialibrary.org](mailto:terri.leslie@vestavialibrary.org) today to reserve your kit.

**Earth Day Virtual Tour** Each week in April, we're celebrating this spectacular planet we call home by spotlighting some of its most magical places:

**Auroras:** Visit Lapland, Finland, to see otherworldly auroras.

**Rafting the Colorado River:** Raft the Colorado River rapids through the Grand Canyon.

**The Great Barrier Reef – Australia:** Explore the sights and sounds of the Great Barrier Reef.

**The ABCs from Space:** Developed by NASA, this tour consists of 26 chapters that reveal locations on the planet that form an alphabet from space.

**Easter Egg-stravaganza** Visit the library website ([www.vestavialibrary.org/department/children](http://www.vestavialibrary.org/department/children)) to join this year's hunt – completely online! Download the entry form and start hunting for Easter eggs throughout the library website. Once you find the eggs, visit the library to pick up your prize!

**Kara Recommends** See Kara's book trailer for *A Woman is No Man*, the bestselling, powerful story of three generations of Palestinian-American women struggling to express their individual desires within the confines of their Arab culture in the wake of shocking, intimate violence in their community.

**Making Memories** Join us as we check out some of the cool projects patrons have made utilizing the Makerspace.

**Open Gaming Goes Online** Join us on Discord to play Super Smash Bros and Jackbox.tv games. Link available at [vestavialibrary.org/event-calendar](http://vestavialibrary.org/event-calendar).

**Picking Up S.T.E.A.M!** Ms. Holly and Ms. Marie share fun STEAM-themed activities for all school-aged children. Most activities planned with things you have at home so you can play along!

**Read & Feed Book Group** *The Invisible Life of Addie LaRue* by V.E. Schwab. Zoom link is available at [vestavialibrary.org/event-calendar](http://vestavialibrary.org/event-calendar).

**Search Engine Sleuth** Are you an internet aficionado? See if you can search out all the right answers to our riddles. Zoom link is available at [vestavialibrary.org/event-calendar](http://vestavialibrary.org/event-calendar).

**Smash Bits!** We've combined our teen's best Smash Bros plays into one hard-punching reel! Want to make our next highlights? Join us in Open Gaming Goes Online every Friday at 4pm!

**Storytime Stars** Join Ms. Anjie and Ms. Lisa for stories, songs, puppets and learning fun. For ages five and under.

**Tara's Creative Corner: Spring Art** Make the cutest wood plaque welcoming spring. Whether it's flowers, butterflies or something special for Easter, we'll get you started with all of the supplies. Free Take & Make Bags are available while supplies last. Call 205.978.4678 or email [terri.leslie@vestavialibrary.org](mailto:terri.leslie@vestavialibrary.org) to reserve your bag today.

**Tech in Ten: Windows 10 Basics Part 1** Tech tips in 10 minutes or less! Brush up on your Windows 10 skills in this introduction to Microsoft's latest operating system. Stay tuned for part two next month!

**Teen Librarians Take on TikTok** Watch as we react to popular trends, attempt new challenges and enjoy cute animal videos!

**Tic-TECH-Toe: Using Your Library's Online Catalog** Learn how to use your library's online catalog to reserve items and check your account online to renew books, pay fines and more.

**What's It?** What IS that thing? See if you can guess what the strange object could be! Answers will appear in the following show. Tune in to see if you were right!

**Writing Group** Join our writing group to share ideas and build writing skills while providing feedback to one another.

For more information, visit [vestavialibrary.org/event-calendar](http://vestavialibrary.org/event-calendar) or call 205.978.0155.



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*He is Risen*

CELEBRATE EASTER SUNDAY AT VHUMC!

Join us as we worship under the tent - Easter Sunday, April 4.  
 Services will be at 7:00, 8:00, 9:00, 10:00, & 11:00 am  
 (childcare available except 7am). The 8:30 traditional & 11:00 contemporary  
 services will be livestreamed on Facebook and [www.vhumc.org](http://www.vhumc.org).



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