



# VOICE OF THE VALLEY

THE RIVER VALLEY LOCAL SCHOOLS NEWSLETTER - SPRING 2023 ISSUE



## Elementary Innovation Labs Help Students Shine

If you have an elementary student, you know the new Innovation Labs are buzzing with activity. This hands-on learning space gives our students a place where they can problem-solve, build, and create. Students love this new learning environment, and we are in awe of their creativity. Using grant funding, we were able to retrofit these spaces to engage our learners in a more hands-on way.

During the fall and winter, students learned about pumpkins, Native Americans, explorers, and Christmas traditions from around the world. There were many opportunities to imagine, build, and create. Some holiday examples include "growing" candy canes, designing and building Santa a new sleigh, designing a new suit for Santa, creating and decorating ornaments, and learning about Christmas lights while experimenting with building circuits.

In January, we explored snowflakes in various ways, including the science behind how they form and the symmetry and patterns in snowflakes.

We used various materials like legos, blocks, shapes, playdoh, and different art materials to build models of our learning. Since we haven't had much snow outside, the K-2 students made their own snow! Fifth graders are even learning to create snowflakes in Tinkercad (a 3D design program) and print them on our 3D printers! Like snowflakes, all our students are unique, and the Innovation Lab is a place where they can shine in their own way!



## We Have the Meats!



This year, the high school added a new course titled Meat Science & Technology.

This course falls within Miss

Elfrink's Agriscience Education program but is open to all interested students.

With Ohio's new graduation requirements, some students may benefit from attaining Industry-Recognized Credentials. This year, the Meat Science & Technology students are earning the AMSA Meat Evaluation Certification, the first of two 6-point certifications.

The AMSA (American Meat Science Association) aims to educate and create awareness of the many job opportunities within the meat science industry. To earn the certification, students must complete assessments in Meat Science, Food Industry Safety, Animal Harvesting Procedures, Carcass & Cuts Evaluation, USDA Beef Grading, and Retail Cut Fabrication. Following completion of classroom training, students will take a 100-question certification exam to earn their certificate.

Students who complete this certification will be able to be identified and connected with skilled employers in the industry. Their certificate will display their knowledge and competency in many areas critical to success in the meat industry. This certification opens the door for success in various post-secondary employment opportunities, including but not limited to meat fabrication, meat production, and other food science-based careers. As is with all Career Technical Education, students will also become more familiar with various professional skills and how to transition into the workforce successfully.

We look forward to seeing where students will take this opportunity and use it to benefit them post-graduation!

## National Honor Society Welcomes New Members



In November of 2022 the application and selection process for National Honor Society was completed. The River Valley chapter of twenty seniors welcomed twenty-one new junior and senior members. These students all showed not only outstanding scholarship but also submitted thorough application materials demonstrating leadership, service, and character. These individuals were inducted at the district level by current members on December 2, 2022 and will be recognized at a countywide induction ceremony on April 27, 2023. The district and the community are enriched by the presence of these individuals.

### *A Note from Transportation*

*This school year, as of February 1, 2023, RV has had 77 red light runners in our district alone. The normal yearly total for Marion County is 40. When driving during school times, watch for buses and be sure to stop 20 feet away.*



## River Valley Farm Update

As we continue to move forward with preparations to grow our own fresh fruits and vegetables do not be fooled that just because the dirt isn't flying, that we have given up. Rather the opposite, we are busy behind the scenes doing things such as mapping out a strategic business plan, creating standard operating procedures, completing trainings in Farm Food Safety, irrigation systems, soil amendments, and pest control.



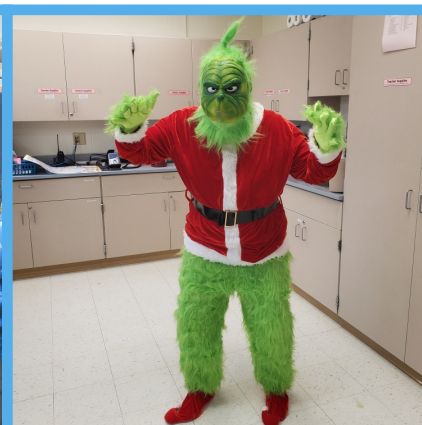
Warm weather is surely ahead and we are looking forward to getting our hands dirty and hopefully partner with our agriculture program to create a whole new learning environment while growing healthy, delicious foods for our students. Our goals are to be serving fresh vegetables during this year's Summer Food Program and have an indoor growing space by mid-July in order to start planting fall crops. This program uses no local tax dollars and is funded through the self-sustaining food service operation.



# Happy Heritage Holiday, The Grinch, & Christmas Clearinghouse

The holiday season was jammed packed with lots of activities at Heritage Elementary. From Christmas trivia, collecting coins for Christmas Clearinghouse, a visit from the Grinch, and our event, Happy Heritage Holiday, the students had tons of fun.

The Heritage students collected coins for Christmas Clearinghouse and were able to donate almost \$1,900 to this charity. Students were also able to meet the Grinch on Friday, December 16th. The Grinch brought presents for every student, and students could see that the Grinch's heart had grown. Also, on Tuesday, December 20th, the students celebrated the holidays with a visit from Dasher and Dancer, two real-life reindeer. Students also participated in ornament making, cookie decorating, and Christmas games. We had over 40 volunteers to help make this day memorable for the students.



## Liberty Holiday Happenings

Third graders at Liberty Elementary practiced their STEAM skills during December. Each class read the book *How to Catch an Elf*, and then working in small groups with students from the other classes had to plan, create, test, and improve upon an Elf trap. Each trap had to include a device that could move. Groups demonstrated how their trap worked, explaining their movement mechanism. Movements included pull strings, trap doors, and springs, among other things. Trap strategies included; glue/tape to get the elf to stick, ladders leading to containers, traps into which he could fall, and enticements such as candy canes and marshmallows. Even the Grinch was in on the scheming!

RIVER VALLEY LOCAL SCHOOLS

**KINDERGARTEN  
REGISTRATION**



**NOW OPEN!**

**[rvk12.org/start](http://rvk12.org/start)**



## Little Libraries - a Shared Project Between RVHS Construction Classes and Elementary Students

The 5th Grade Viking Volunteers picked a project to complete that would give back to the RV Community. The project this year was to provide little libraries at each elementary building. The volunteers reached out to Mr. Winslow at RVHS and he and two of his students, Bradyn Harrison and Miles Fagala, took on the creation of the libraries. The next step for the Viking Volunteers will be to decorate these libraries and have them installed.



## Students Learn Valuable Skills through T-Shirt Making Project

During the months of November and December, the students in the Specialized Skills Unit completed a fundraiser making Holiday t-shirts for our building staff. Students practiced sorting items by size and color. Students learned about completing orders using a Google Spreadsheet to highlight names and orders. Lastly, the students delivered orders using matching skills with staff photos. This fundraiser raised over \$200 dollars to be used towards our future Staff Treat Cart Days.





# DISTRICT FINANCIAL UPDATE



Fiscal responsibility continues to be a focus in all aspects at River Valley Local School District. Funding provided by the state does not fully cover the actual costs necessary to operate a school district, so districts are forced to pursue levies with local taxpayers to fill the gap. To protect the investment our voters made to our community over 20 years ago, plan for the future, and continue to provide a quality education for our students, River Valley will be on the ballot on May 2, 2023, pursuing two separate levy issues. Taxpayers will see the two issues below on the ballot in May:

## Issue 1: Bond + Permanent Improvement (PI) Levy

- 25-year \$21.1 million Bond Levy
- 2.5 mill Continuing Permanent Improvement Levy

## Issue 2: Income Tax Levy Renewal

- 20-year 1% Earned Income Tax

As the district evaluated what options were available after the Emergency Levy failed to be renewed in November 2022, our main focus was to be able to plan long-term as a district while making sure that our voters would pay a lower tax rate than they are currently paying on voted levies in our District. All three of the District's current voted property tax levies will cease collections in calendar year 2023. The property tax levies that the District will have on the ballot in May are not set to begin until calendar year 2024. This means there will be no overlap between the current voted levies and the proposed levies. The table below shows the present and proposed property tax levies rates, demonstrating no increase in tax rates.

Current Property Tax Levies		
Current Issues	Millage Amount	Expires
Emergency Levy	2.30	December 2023
Bond Levy Construction	3.52	December 2023
Bond Levy Classroom Maintenance	0.26	December 2023
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>6.08</b>	



Proposed Property Tax Levies		
Proposed Issues	Millage Amount (Projected)	Effective Date
Bond Levy (\$21.1 million for 25 years)	3.56	January 2024
Permanent Improvement Levy (PI) (Continuing)	2.50	January 2024
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>6.06</b>	<b>NO INCREASE</b>

The 1% earned income tax levy is set to expire on December 31, 2024. Income tax revenue is used toward day-to-day operations of the school district, such as utilities, supplies, and staffing. This levy represents 12% of our annual revenue. The proposed income tax renewal would not begin until January 1, 2025, and would still be for 1%, but with an increase in term from 5 years to 20 years.

Each levy type serves a different purpose. The table below outlines what each can and cannot be used for:

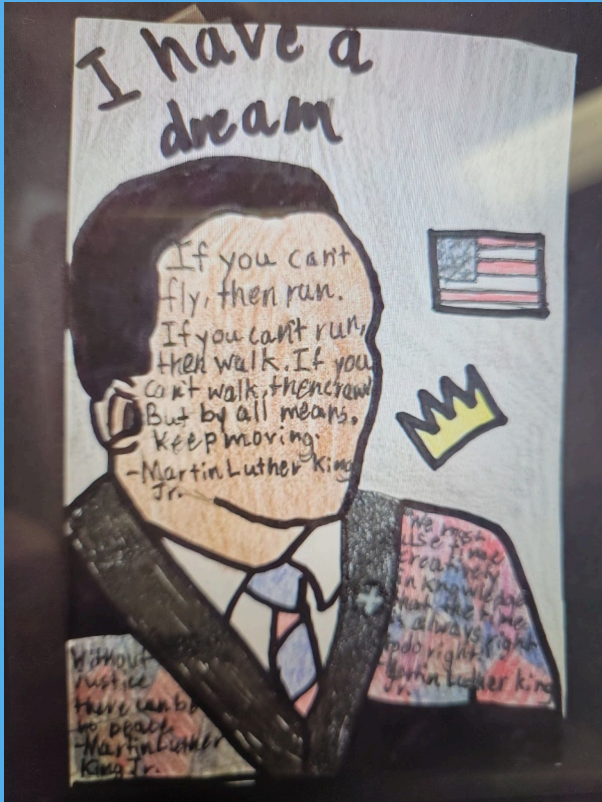
	Bond	Permanent Improvement (PI)	Income Tax
<b>CAN use for:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Capital Improvements: roofs, HVAC, upgrades, and facilities.</li> <li>• Must have a useful life of 5 years or more.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Buses, Technology, and Preventative Maintenance</li> <li>• Anything with a useful life of 5 years or more.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Operating expenses, utilities, personnel, programs, curriculum.</li> </ul>
<b>NOT used for:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Salaries or benefits</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Salaries or benefits</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No restrictions, will be primarily used for the above purposes..</li> </ul>

The combination of the Bond+PI and the Income Tax Levies are a critical part of the district's plan to address immediate, long-term, and preventative maintenance needs, as well as having a form of relatively consistent funding for the daily operations of the District.

If you have any questions or would like additional information regarding the levies on the ballot, please call our main office at 740-725-5400, and we can schedule a time to discuss.

## Student Recognized for Martin Luther King Project

Heritage Elementary is very proud of one of our fifth grade students, Addison Tullous. Addison won 3rd place in the art category in the Peace and Freedom Committee's Martin Luther King Project Contest. Students were able to submit projects in the areas of oratorical, art, and essay/poetry. Congratulations Addison!



Addison Tullous' Peace and Freedom Committee's Martin Luther King Project Contest Entry



## Liberty Students Complete ROX (Ruling Our eXperiences)

At Liberty Elementary, a small group of 5th grade girls had the opportunity to participate in a 10 week, 20 session group called ROX (Ruling Our eXperiences). The mission of ROX is to create generations of confident girls who control their own relationships, experiences, decisions, and futures. This fall, the girls learned to communicate effectively, have empathy, practice verbal and physical self defense, stress management skills, and conflict resolution strategies. This picture is of the first semester ROX girls practicing their physical self defense skills. eight more girls will get to experience ROX at Liberty this spring semester!

## 16th Annual Martin Luther King, Jr. Breakfast Celebration

The Peace and Freedom Committee invited River Valley Viking Volunteers from Heritage and Liberty Elementary to give their time on Monday, January 16th, at the 16th Annual Martin Luther King Jr. Breakfast Celebration. They were also given the opportunity to listen to the keynote speaker, Marion native, Colonel Charles Jones. Colonel Jones is the superintendent of The Ohio State Highway Patrol. Students were encouraged to continue to follow their dreams and learn more about what Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Day is truly all about.



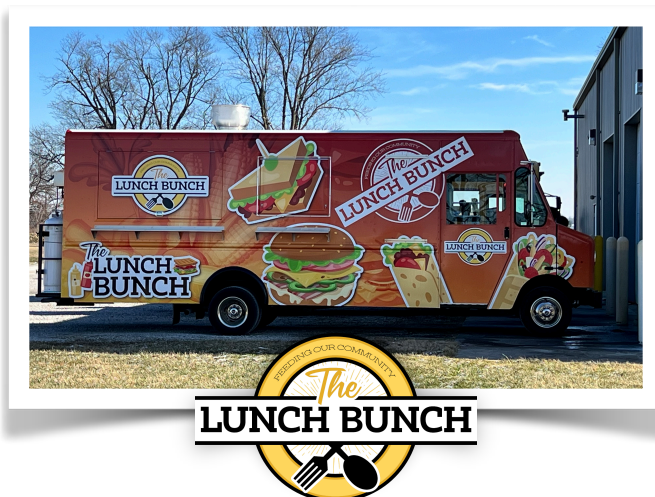


# The Lunch Bunch

River Valley's Food Service team, The Lunch Bunch, creates revenue for their department without spending any funds from the general funds (No Local Tax Money Used). Below are a few ways RV is innovating in the areas of shared resources and public service through this new model for food service.

- The Food Service team offers catering through The Lunch Bunch brand. All catering revenue is returned directly to the school district, which also helps offset the Summer Food Program for our children.
- The Food Service team provides Food Service administrative support to Cardington-Lincoln Local Schools. This has helped RV develop one of the top food services programs in the state.
- Utilizing outside revenue (No Local Tax Money Used), the Food Service team recently purchased a food truck. This will create new business opportunities, with all revenue returning to the RV Food Service department.
- Our RVHS cafeteria has become a career-based learning environment for some RV high school students. They will gain real work experience and learn about food safety, good work habits, team responsibilities, and hands-on productivity skills. While working alongside our Food and Nutrition Team, they will earn points toward graduation and gain work skills, making them more marketable in their future careers.

RV is excited to see what new and trailblazing ideas The Lunch Bunch team develops as they continue to grow their programs by serving delicious and creative food for our community.



## SUMMER FOOD



## Summer EBT News

In order for students to qualify for the upcoming Summer EBT program one of the qualifications is that parents must complete an Education Assistance Application and qualify for free and reduced meals in this current school year. If you have already qualified in the 2022-23 school year you do not need to re-apply. However, if you have not applied, please go to <https://www.myschoolapps.com/Application> to complete an application.

### Did You Know?

*River Valley's Food Service program, The Lunch Bunch, is a stand-alone, not-for-profit organization that must generate enough revenue to pay for their expenses including food supplies, kitchen equipment repair and replacement, and staffing needs.*

*No local tax dollars are used to support the Food Service program.*

To keep up with all **The Lunch Bunch** events, follow us:

**[facebook.com/k12lunchbunch](https://www.facebook.com/k12lunchbunch)**



# Strategies and Support for Career Pathways

Did you have a student who is 14 years old or older with Section 504 Plan or an Individualized Education Plan?

Opportunities for Ohioans with Disabilities (OOD) and Marion Board of DD can be a great help. Opportunities for Ohioans with Disabilities works with the River Valley Local School District and Marion County Boards Developmental Disabilities to empower students with disabilities to gain employment and independence.

## Services and supports may include:

- Job Exploration of a Variety of Workplace Settings
- Paid Work Experiences with Job Coaches
- Soft Skills for Work and Independence
- Self-Advocacy (request and accept support)
- Counseling on Educational and Training Options
- Connection to Ongoing Support Options
- College Financial Support
- 

Ready to get started? Contact your child's case manager at River Valley to assist with making the referral to Opportunities for Ohioans with Disabilities and Marion County Board of DD.



Nate Young (shown above) is a River Valley Student who received services jointly with OOD and MCBDD. He has been successfully employed for several years at the Marion Meijer Store.

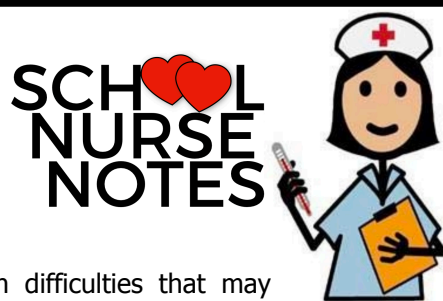
## Have you scheduled an eye exam this year?

Did you know that children tend to be visual learners. Unfortunately, many eye conditions develop in childhood, which is why it's important to be proactive about your child's visual health. The most effective way to keep your child's eyes in good shape is to have them undergo eye exams regularly.

With regular eye exams, your optometrist can determine if your child has vision difficulties that may compromise their learning and development. The sooner these problems are identified, the better chances of maintaining your children's visual health and potentially lessen their learning stress.

The American Optometric Association recommends that children should have a comprehensive eye exam at least once between their third and fifth year of life. Children, aged 6 to 18 years old, should ideally have a comprehensive eye exam before they enter Kindergarten and at least once every year thereafter.

What are you waiting for? Schedule your exam today!





# RV Staff Visits Local Businesses

The River Valley District Leadership Team (DLT), which includes fourteen teachers, ten administrators, and one parent, has been busy partnering with area businesses to benefit our students and families. We met at Marion Goodwill and Cenmac Metalworks this school year to learn more about their operations and vision. At both locations, we had excellent conversations regarding our educational programs and how we can tie into what Marion area businesses need in their employees. We are continuously collecting information from these businesses to give our students and families future opportunities for employment right in our backyard.

**River Valley  
Administration Office  
740-725-5400**

Heritage Elementary  
740-725-5500

Liberty Elementary  
740-725-5600

River Valley Middle School  
740-725-5700

River Valley High School  
740-725-5800

See our calendar of events at:  
**[www.rvk12.org](http://www.rvk12.org)**



**“Though I do not believe that a plant will spring up where no seed has been, I have great faith in a seed... Convince me that you have a seed there, and I am prepared to expect wonders.”**

**– Henry David Thoreau**



## **River Valley Local Schools Board of Education Members**

**PRESIDENT- DON RENGERT**  
**VICE PRESIDENT- CHERYL BEINEKE**  
**STACI GLENN-SHORT**  
**ROBERT STUMP**  
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