

# COMMUNITY NEWS

News & Events for the City of Vestavia Hills • Dec. 2022/Jan. 2023

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



Jeff Downes,  
City Manager  
City of  
Vestavia Hills

## CITY MANAGER'S REPORT

'Tis the Season! Holiday gatherings, warm and cozy fires, family and faith celebrations, coupled with sharing of time and gifts, mark the next several weeks. Most of us see this time as a time to have fun. For those that remember my article from last month, I highlighted the harkening of a strategic effort to make Vestavia Hills fun through efforts by City and Chamber leadership. These works are many and varied; however, I want to point out the intentionality of our retooling of this opening

phrase and elaborate on our "See the Season" efforts.

"See the Season" is a joint effort of the Chamber of Commerce and City of Vestavia Hills to promote our businesses by offering visitors and residents a unique destination to various trade areas where seasonal storefront art makes for ambiance, fun and opportunities to take photos celebrating this wonderful time of year. The goal is for there to be themes of storefront artwork that will draw interest from individuals as they shop or simply visit Vestavia Hills.

This interesting and convivial effort intentionally opens Vestavia Hills to a world of possibilities as we sell ourselves as a fun and engaging place to work, play, visit or invest our valuable time. If you are interested in participating but need more information, visit <https://vhal.org/community/city-events>.

New York City has Fifth Avenue storefronts decorated for the holiday season. Why can't we have a unique take on this tradition by starting our own such effort in Vestavia Hills? I am excited about the opportunity created by all our business leadership to create an atmosphere that intrigues the public and highlights the awesome businesses that exist in our community. I wish everyone a wonderful Christmas and holiday season. 2023 is going to be a great year! Get out and "See the Season" in Vestavia Hills!



**BOARD  
VACANCY**

• APPLY NOW •

There are many volunteer opportunities for Vestavia Hills residents to get involved in the community. Volunteering is a rewarding way to serve your city, meet new people, discover new interests, have fun and learn something new.

**Applications are being accepted NOW for vacancies on the Design Review Board.** For more information,

visit <https://vhal.org/community/get-involved>.

## COMMUNITY CALENDAR

Events and dates subject to change. Visit [vhal.org/calendar](https://vhal.org/calendar) for the most up-to-date event information.

### December 2022

- 1 Design Review Board**, Executive Conference Room, 6pm
- 6 Civic Center Ribbon Cutting**, Civic Center, 10am
- 8 Planning and Zoning Commission**, Council Chamber, 6pm
- 9 ASO "Sounds of the Season,"** Civic Center, 6:30pm
- 10 Breakfast with Santa**, Civic Center, 7:30am
- 11 Holiday Parade & Celebration**, Liberty Park, 2pm
- 12 City Council Meeting**, Council Chamber, 6pm
- 13 Chamber Luncheon**, Vestavia Country Club, 11:30am
- 15 Board of Zoning Adjustment**, Council Chamber, 6pm
- 19 City Council Work Session**, Council Chamber, 5pm
- 19 City Council Meeting**, Council Chamber, 6pm
- 20 Parks and Recreation Board**, Civic Center, 7:30am
- 20 Menorah Lighting Ceremony**, City Hall, 6pm
- 23 & 26 Municipal Offices Closed**, Christmas\*
- 30 Municipal Offices Closed**, New Year's\*

### January 2023

- 2 Municipal Offices Closed**, New Year's\*
- 5 Design Review Board**, Executive Conference Room, 6pm
- 9 City Council Meeting**, Council Chamber, 6pm
- 10 Chamber Luncheon**, Vestavia Country Club, 11:30am
- 12 Planning and Zoning Commission**, Council Chamber, 6pm
- 16 Municipal Offices Closed**, Martin Luther King Jr. Day
- 17 Parks and Recreation Board**, Civic Center, 7:30am
- 19 Board of Zoning Adjustment**, Council Chamber, 6pm
- 23 City Council Meeting**, Council Chamber, 6pm

\*Sanitation routes will run as normal due to holidays occurring on Sunday.



Ashley Curry,  
Mayor  
City of  
Vestavia Hills

## MAYOR'S MESSAGE

As this year comes to an end, let's look back on what was accomplished during 2022.

Our much-anticipated Civic Center has finally opened! The entire facility is absolutely amazing, especially the ballroom. It has 10,000 square feet of space with a spectacular view southeast to Double Oak mountain. I feel sure this incredible facility will serve the needs of our

community for years to come.

One of the first events in the ballroom was our annual Veterans Day celebration. This year's event featured a keynote address by Rear Admiral W. Kent Davis (retired), as well as performances by the VHHS Wind Symphony and Honor Choir. I hope you were able to attend this event as we recognized the service of all our men and women in the armed forces.

Speaking of the band and choir, I congratulate them on being selected to participate the annual "New Year's Celebration" in Rome, Italy in late December 2022 through January 2023.

What started as the "Community Spaces and Infrastructure Plan" several years ago is now reality and a major accomplishment for the

City. Much of the Wald Park renovations have been completed with the tennis and pickleball courts to be completed in the near future. One of the infrastructure projects with the Community Spaces Plan involves lane-widening and a sidewalk project on Crosshaven Drive. I am proud to say that the City has completed its portion of the projects, and the portion being handled by Jefferson County should be completed soon.

Hopefully you were able to attend the Tree Lighting Festival on November 29. This year's event also included the Grand Opening of our new Civic Center. Attendees were able to tour the new facility. If you were not able to participate, you need to come by for a visit.

As this year draws to a close, you might be thinking about your New Year's resolution. National surveys indicate that around 93% of people that made resolutions last year failed to accomplish them. Sabrina Romanoff, a clinical psychologist said, "We often fail in achieving and keeping them because they focus on a specific outcome. When focus is placed on a specific outcome, it can be challenging to persevere in your efforts toward it if results are not immediate." So instead of the usual "lose weight, exercise more" resolution, I think I will resolve to think about our "blessings" and be grateful for them each day. We are truly blessed to live in Vestavia Hills and have the quality of life that we enjoy. I wish you a joyous holiday season and a Happy New Year.

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of doing in the future. His  
answer brings everything  
into focus for us.

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

## **SUPERINTENDENT'S MESSAGE**

One of the many things I am grateful to my parents for is the sacrifice they made for me to have 10 years of piano lessons. Whether it was practicing on the keyboard or singing with a choir or ensemble, music was at the center of my formative years. It was a medium that fostered growth of intellectual

and interpersonal skills that have proven to be important in my life. Those experiences convinced me of the importance of the arts in the education experience for children.

Each year in Vestavia Hills City Schools, students in elementary grades participate in art and music classes. This year, more than half of students in grades 6-12 will take an arts class; they will also participate in performances, plays and competitions throughout the year. I hope you are able to attend some of these events this holiday season. You will see firsthand the results of the unparalleled support of our community to make the arts come alive through our children.

Our Arts Education Coordinator, Faith Lenhart, says: "Access to quality arts education is crucial for our students. Participation in the arts allows students to stretch their minds past the traditional classroom and experience success in a new and different way. An arts education fosters teamwork as well as individual risk-taking. Our students are well-rounded and prepared to leave our school system with communication skills, time management skills and creative thinking skills that will serve them in any profession they choose to pursue."

Noted psychologist Dr. Daniel Goleman found that as much as 10% of a person's career success can be attributed to their intelligence quotient (left-brain functions); all the rest can be attributed to their Emotional Quotient (right-brain functions) which is the ability of a person to be aware, regulate and manage their behavior and relationships with others. In his book, *A Whole New Mind*, Daniel Pink emphasizes the importance of right-brained thinking in our conceptual age. He posits that skills such as designing, storytelling and symphony are difference makers when combined with academic and intellectual knowledge. Both writers' perspectives are compelling when considering future employability in a competitive job market.

Most of our graduates will not pursue a career in the arts. However, participating in the arts will be invaluable to their success in whatever profession they choose. You can learn more about the arts programs in VHCS and how it is a key part of our *1Rebel 1Future* plan by watching the November board meeting and listening to *The Vestavia Hills City Schools Podcast* at [www.vhcs.us](http://www.vhcs.us).



# **VESTAVIA ARTS**

*Celebrate the Holidays with  
Vestavia Hills City Schools Performing Arts*

11.29 VESTAVIA HILLS TREE LIGHTING CITY HALL 5:30PM

12.6 VHHS CELEBRATE THE SEASON 6PM

12.6 VHEE 2ND GRADE CONCERT 1:15PM

12.7 VHEE 4TH GRADE CONCERT 1:15PM

12.8&9 VHEW 4TH GRADE CONCERT 1PM

12.8 VHDR 3RD GRADE CONCERT 9AM & 1PM

12.8 LPMS CHOIR CONCERT 6PM

12.12 LPMS BAND CONCERT 6PM

12.12 PIZITZ CHOIR CONCERT VHUMC 7PM

12.13 PIZITZ BAND CONCERT 6&7PM

12.13 PIZITZ UNIFIED ARTS CHOIR CONCERT 11AM



## ACTIVE ADULTS (55+)

- Join us for **fun, fellowship and lunch** at New Merkel House in Cahaba Heights every Monday-Friday. Lunch is served daily at 11:45am.
- New Merkel House offers **stretching classes** on Mondays at 10:30am, **Tai Chi** on Tuesdays at 12:30pm and **chair yoga** on Thursdays at 10:30am.
- We will celebrate **National Pear Day** at New Merkel House on Friday, December 2! Stop by from 9-11am and grab a pear to celebrate this delicious fruit! *Sponsored by Cornerstone Caregiving.*
- Join us for the **Senior Citizens Association Luncheon** on Monday, December 12 at 11:30am at the new Civic Center for a delicious lunch and guest speaker Dolores Hydock. The cost is \$8 per person. Call 205.978.0166 to make your reservation today. *Entertainment sponsored by The Crossing at Riverchase.* Mark your calendar for next month's luncheon on January 9!
- **Lunch Bunch** will be on Thursday, December 15, at the Bright Star in Bessemer! Meet at Vestavia Hills Aquatic Complex at 10:30am for free transportation. Lunch is at your discretion; call 205.978.0166 to reserve your spot!
- Join us on Monday, December 19 for our **Active Adults Christmas Party** at the new Civic Center! From 10am-noon we will eat, drink and be merry with friends while enjoying entertainment by the Barbershop Quartet.

## CHRISTMAS TREE SAFETY

The Vestavia Hills Fire Department would like to remind you to be safe while celebrating this holiday season. According to the National Fire Protection Association, fire departments across the United States respond on an average of 160 house fires per year that start with Christmas trees. Though they are not common, there is a better chance for them to cause serious damage and injuries when they do. Christmas trees are combustible items that become more flammable as they continue to dry out. In the right conditions, Christmas trees can become fully engulfed in approximately 10 seconds. Please use the following tips when putting up a tree:

- Keep your tree in the best possible condition by buying it fresh and watering it daily.
- Always locate your tree away from heat sources like fireplaces, candles, heating vents and space heaters.
- Limit the number of light sets on the tree. Consider using LED lights that will put out less heat than incandescent lights.
- Always turn off Christmas lights before leaving home or going to bed.
- Confirm lights on artificial trees are in good condition; check for frayed wires and damage to plug connectors.

We hope you have a safe holiday season!

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**MICHAEL TORTOMASE**  
VICE PRESIDENT

**CHARLIE CONKLIN**  
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**Michelle Hawkins,**  
**President**  
Vestavia Hills  
Chamber of Commerce

## CHAMBER NEWS

Happy Holidays Vestavia Hills! It's the most wonderful time of the year! The Chamber of Commerce and the City of Vestavia Hills are thrilled to be working together on Holiday in the Hills. Holiday celebrations kicked off in November with Deck the Heights in Cahaba Heights, All is Bright at the Vestavia City Center and the Tree Lighting Festival &

Civic Center Open House. And there are even more opportunities to celebrate in December! Join the festivities at Breakfast with Santa, December 10 at 7:30am at the new Civic Center; Vestavia Hills Holiday Parade & Celebration, December 11 at 2pm in Liberty Park; and Menorah Lighting, December 20 at 6pm at City Hall.

We are tickled pink to finally share – The Chamber of Commerce has officially moved our office to the new Vestavia Hills Civic Center! We are so thankful and grateful to the City in providing us with such a beautiful space! We welcome you to come by and visit us and see our new office.

As you are shopping for holiday décor and gifts be sure to remember the amazing businesses we have, right here in Vestavia Hills. Not only will your locally purchased gift be more special to the recipient, but your

choice to shop local is immensely valued as these businesses are the lifeblood of our community. Your support makes a HUGE difference!

The Vestavia Hills Chamber of Commerce wishes you and your family a blessed holiday season, overflowing with peace and joy. May 2023 be healthy and prosperous for each of you. From my heart, I personally want to thank you for the opportunity to serve you and share my love and hope to our incredible community. I look forward to working together in 2023 as we strive for “A Life Above.”

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**HOLIDAY**  
*in the* **HILLS**

<p style="text-align: center;"><i>Tree Lighting Festival</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;">November 29, 6:00 pm Vestavia Hills City Hall</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Enjoy entertainment, merchant give-aways, a visit with Santa &amp; the lighting of the tree!</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><i>Breakfast with Santa</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;">December 10, 7:30-10:00 am New Vestavia Hills Civic Center</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Bring the whole family for a pancake breakfast with Santa! Free to attend.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><i>Vestavia Hills Holiday Parade</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;">December 11, 2:00 pm Liberty Park</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Enjoy the City's Holiday Parade &amp; Celebration Be in the parade! Registration form at <a href="http://vestaviahills.org">vestaviahills.org</a></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><i>Menorah Lighting</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;">December 20, 6:00 pm Vestavia Hills City Hall</p> <p style="text-align: center;">See the lighting of the Menorah and enjoy refreshments and activities!</p>

Presented by the City of Vestavia Hills & the Vestavia Hills Chamber of Commerce

Visit [www.vestaviahills.org](http://www.vestaviahills.org) for more details and a full calendar of events.



## MEET JEFF HUGHES

Jeff Hughes is the Assistant Public Works Director for the City of Vestavia Hills.

His primary responsibilities include overseeing the Public Works crews; maintenance of City streets (sign repair/replacement, gutter repair, potholes, pipe repair/replacement, etc.); ordering and scheduling delivery of materials; and submitting quarterly stormwater reports.

In his spare time, Jeff enjoys fishing. He is an Alabama fan and has one adult son. If you see Jeff around the City, be sure to say hello!



A Taste of Vestavia Hills Restaurants & Fine Wines

**New Date! January 24, 2023**

**6:30-9:00 pm**

**New Vestavia Hills Civic Center  
1090 Montgomery Highway**

Enjoy food & wine tastings provided by Vestavia Hills Area Restaurants, plus a silent auction. Proceeds benefit the Vestavia Hills Chamber of Commerce Foundation.

Tickets are \$50 each and can be purchased at [www.vestaviahills.org](http://www.vestaviahills.org) or calling (205) 823-5011.



AND THE WORD BECAME FLESH  
AND DWELT AMONG US.

# CHRISTMAS *eve*

AT VESTAVIA METHODIST

**2PM, 4PM, 6PM, 8PM, 11PM**

FOR MORE INFORMATION VISIT [VHUMC.ORG/CHRISTMAS](http://VHUMC.ORG/CHRISTMAS)



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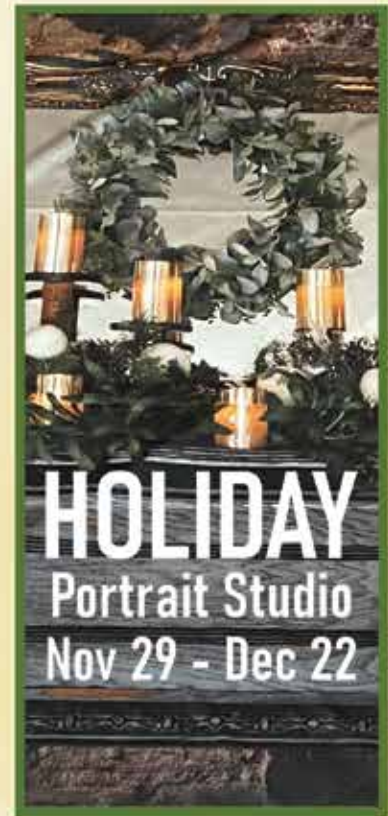


# DECEMBER EVENTS

- 1 **CLOSED for Staff Day**
- 2 **Open Gaming** 4:00 pm, Community Room
- 3 **Dungeons and Dragons One-Shot**  
2:00 pm, Historical Room  
**Ms. Courtney's Library Stop!**  
10:30 am, Community Room
- 6 **After-school Adventures**  
3:30 pm, Children's Program Room  
**Tabletop Gaming Group**  
4:00 pm, Community Room  
**Toddler-a-Go-Go**  
9:30 am & 10:30 am, Community Room  
**Handmade with Holly: Mini String Wreaths**  
11:00 am, Community Room
- 7 **Story Friends**  
10:30 am, Children's Program Room  
**Twelve Below: Winter Origami!**  
3:30 pm, Children's Program Room  
**Writing Group** 4:00 pm, Historical Room
- 8 **Book Babies** 10:00 am, Treehouse  
**Chess Club** 4:30 pm, Historical Room  
**Read & Feed Book Group**  
6:00 pm, Community Room
- 9 **Craft\*Lab: Holiday Zentangle Art with Darla**  
7:00 pm, Community Room  
**Open Gaming** 4:00 pm, Community Room
- 12 **Exam Study Breaks**  
3:00, 5:00 & 7:00 pm, Historical Room  
**Extended Library Hours:** Open until 9:00 pm

- Hallmark Movie & Bingo Party**  
6:00 pm, Community Room
- 13 **Exam Study Breaks**  
3:00, 5:00 & 7:00 pm, Historical Room  
**Extended Library Hours:** Open until 9:00 pm  
**After-school Adventures**  
3:30 pm, Children's Program Room  
**Family Night with Santa!**  
Meal 6:00 pm, Show 6:30 pm, Community Room  
**Toddler-a-Go-Go**  
9:30 am & 10:30 am, Community Room
- 14 **Exam Study Breaks**  
3:00, 5:00 & 7:00 p.m. Historical Room  
**Extended Library Hours:** Open until 9:00 pm  
**Story Friends**  
10:30 am, Children's Program Room  
**Twelve Below: Gingerbread House Competition!**  
3:30 pm, Children's Program Room
- 15 **Book Babies** 10:00 am, Treehouse
- 16 **Snowdown Throwdown**  
4:00 pm, Community Room
- 17 **Dungeons and Dragons: The Journey Continues**  
10:00 am, Historical Room  
**Ms. Courtney's Library Stop!**  
10:30 am, Community Room
- 20 **Holiday Baubles** 4:00 pm, Treehouse
- 20 - Jan 3 **No Children's Programs**
- 21 **Among Us** 4:00 pm, Discord

- 27 **2022 in Review** 4:00 pm, Makerspace
- 28 **Anime Club** 4:00 pm, Historical Room
- 29 **Open Maker Lab** 2:00 - 6:00 pm, Makerspace



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Children & Tweens (Birth-Gr. 6) Teens (Gr. 6-12) Adults & Tech (Ages 18+) Makerspace (All ages, unless noted)



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