

COMMUNITY NEWS

News & Events for the City of Vestavia Hills • May 2020

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

COMMUNITY CALENDAR

May 2020

The following information is accurate as of the print date of this publication. The events and dates listed below are subject to change. Please refer to the calendar on the City of Vestavia Hills website for the most up-to-date information.

- 4 **Parks & Recreation Board Work Session**, Executive Conference Room, 11:30 a.m.
- 4 **Annexation Committee**, Executive Conference Room, 3 p.m.
- 7 **Design Review Board**, Executive Conference Room, 6 p.m.
- 10 **Mother's Day**
- 11 **Senior Citizens Luncheon**, Dogwood Room, 11:30 a.m.
- 11 **City Council Meeting**, Council Chamber, 6 p.m.
- 12 **Chamber Luncheon**, Vestavia Country Club, 11:30 a.m.
- 14 **Planning & Zoning Commission**, Council Chamber, 6 p.m.
- 18 **Candidates Day**, Vestavia Hills City Hall, 10 a.m.
- 18 **Council Work Session**, Executive Conference Room, 6 p.m.
- 19 **Parks & Recreation Board Meeting**, Executive Conference Room, 7 a.m.
- 21 **Board of Zoning Adjustment**, Council Chamber, 6 p.m.
- 25 **Municipal Offices Closed** in observance of Memorial Day
- 28 **City Council Meeting**, Council Chamber, 6 p.m.



MAYOR'S MESSAGE

Ashley C. Curry, Vestavia Hills Mayor

To say things have **really changed** in the last few weeks is an understatement. We are in the midst of an event unprecedented in our lifetimes. I remember the Ebola outbreak in 2014 and the Swine Flu pandemic of 2009, but neither was as globally-widespread or as deadly as COVID-19.

We are continuing to monitor the COVID-19 pandemic through daily updates from county and state health officials and we are following their recommendations, as well as sharing the information with our citizens through our Facebook page and the City website

(<https://vhal.org/alert-center>). I hope that by the time this article is published that we will have seen progress in curbing the continued spread of the virus.

In the midst of this pandemic, the City held its first council meeting via online teleconferencing in which participants attended and participated virtually. Participants were able to not only listen, but could also ask questions to council members that were present or who were also attending virtually.

We have been able to continue City services while limiting face-to-face contact for the

– **Mayor's Message** continued on page 2



CITY MANAGER'S REPORT

Jeff Downes, Vestavia Hills City Manager

In times like those we are experiencing today, it helps to lean on wise words whether they are expressed through our faith, leadership gurus or common wisdom gained by our mentors. For me, three statements rise to the top of my list. One of my faith leaders, Father Frankline Fumokong, always begins his preaching by saying, "God is good all the time" and the congregation replies, "All the time, God is good!" This is a reminder that, regardless of our particular faith, there is a higher power that loves us and will stand by us in good times and bad. Charles Swindoll has been quoted as saying, "We are all faced with a series of great opportunities brilliantly disguised as impossible situations." This reinforces his other messages that relate to attitude being essential to guide us through tough times. Lastly, but not of lesser importance to me, is a common sense message given to me by my high school football coach

and mentor, Coach Cliff Little. Coach Little would regularly state, in his very plain ways, "Hey Downes, life is tough!" Only later in my life would I take his statement to heart and realize he was teaching me to keep faith and be resilient as, inevitably, we all face challenges individually and collectively.

The current pandemic is putting stress on all of us. Are we keeping faith, keeping a positive attitude and resiliency? What I have observed in our wonderful community of Vestavia Hills answers this question with a resounding "Yes." Residents are going out of their way to help neighbors in need. We are supporting struggling restaurants and retail establishments with extra curbside visits. Families are spending quality time with one another and refreshing lifelong bonds. These observations give me great hope that our community will be even stronger after the pandemic than before.

– **City Manager's Report** continued on page 2

BOARD OF EDUCATION



FROM THE SUPERINTENDENT

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

One of my elective classes in college was sports officiating. My interest in athletics led me to register for it, and it proved to be an invaluable experience. I learned a very important lesson about being an official: you are doing your job best when the players and fans don't know you are there. Thus, it is an important role that requires one to have the confidence to be humble. Put another way, officials are the supporting cast critical to the success of athletic competition.

The change in how Vestavia Hills City Schools has been providing academic instruction this spring brought about the need for our organization to adapt. Our professional educators are on the front line of providing instruction and emotional support to students and parents. They have made a significant shift to a new way of teaching. We are blessed to have talented, creative, and determined educators that have embraced this time not as a challenge, but an opportunity. To succeed in this new endeavor, there had to be a strong support network around them.

Since mid-March, VHCS has had another team of professionals supporting our schools behind the scenes. Our Child Nutrition Program staff prepared breakfast and lunch meals for students to take home during the week. The Technology staff prepared and distributed more than 2,300 Chromebooks to children to use for virtual learning. Staff from the custodial, maintenance, and transportation departments kept buildings and buses clean and disinfected. Secretaries and bookkeepers continued the essential business operation of our system. And paraprofessionals and extended day program managers were actively supporting teachers and the needs of students.

The VHCS support team members are critical to the success of our mission to provide students the opportunity to learn without limits. Not having them supporting our teachers and students through this change would have been like having no officials during the Iron Bowl. They go about their work quietly and often without recognition. They confidently focus on removing limits by making sure students and educators are supported, cared for, and safe.

Throughout the closure of schools, our professional support team demonstrated the same passion and pride in their responsibilities as if our children were in classrooms. It took the expertise of every person in our system to make this spring a success. I am grateful for the invaluable role each of them has served!

Mayor's Message *continued from page 1*

protection of all involved. We are hopeful that our offices will be back to normal operation in the very near future.

In closing I would like to share some thoughts that I received from a long-time friend. His message was very appropriate for this time in our lives. He shared this from our American history:

"These are the times that try men's souls." This was written by Thomas Paine in his pamphlet titled *The American Crisis*. He penned this article in 1775 and it was intended to inspire, motivate and encourage all Americans to not give up! You see, they had entered into a "War of Independence" from England and were losing on all fronts.

The British had them on the run, the Continental Army was suffering one defeat after another, and goods such as food and ammunition were in short supply. If the British won, patriots like Paine would certainly have been hanged for treason.

Our current events are testing men's souls. We are in a battle with an enemy we can't see and the field of conflict is our schools, our markets and our everyday interactions with others. This fight is for the soul of our nation, the health of our nation, the economic livelihood of our country and the welfare of our citizens. I trust that now, just as in 1775, we will find the resolve to persevere.

City Manager's Report *continued from page 1*

Many of our residents have shared these same thoughts with me. We all recognize that the rest of the spring will be different in how our children are educated, how we play sports and how we work. Even though we are navigating these changes, we can still sustain our way of life in Vestavia Hills.

As City Manager, I would be remiss if I did not recognize our employees that continue to keep our community safe. Our firefighters, police officers and public works employees continue to bring their top game every day. They are the foundation of services in the City. Additionally, all of our administrative and program-oriented employees quickly adapted in creative ways to adhere to safe business practices while still maintaining a level of normalcy for our residents. Let's keep our chins up and persevere. We are all blessed to be a part of Vestavia Hills. Bless you all!

SENIOR SERVICES

“Being able to help your neighbors, however you can, humbles you and opens your heart to others that need a helping hand.”

We greatly appreciate the impact volunteers have on the community year-round and would like to highlight two volunteer groups whose services are invaluable to our seniors: Meals on Wheels and Senior Transportation.

The Meals on Wheels program provides more than just a meal for many of our seniors – it provides an opportunity for volunteers to provide nutrition as well as social interaction. The daily visit from a friendly volunteer is just as valued as the meal they receive, and program participants are incredibly appreciative. We often hear comments such as:

- “I don’t know what I would do without your help.”
- “Thank you for loving us.”
- “We know you wouldn’t do this if you didn’t care about us.”
- “How wonderful you are and your visit gives me an uplift for the day.”
- “It is amazing to see the smile that greets me when I open my door.”

For volunteers, the experience of giving back and helping another person is just as special. Clare Clements has been volunteering for 25 years and says taking care of our seniors brings her joy. When she began volunteering, her father would accompany her to visit with our homebound. Her children, and now grandchildren, have also joined her. Many generations of kindness flow through Clare and her family.

Janie Vianey says the joy that comes from delivering Meals on Wheels is something that is hard to describe. “My clients are so appreciative of the meals they receive. Seeing each one of them twice a month is such a highlight for me! Being a volunteer for the past 10 years has blessed my life in many ways!”

The Senior Transportation program, which began in July 1985 under the direction of former Mayor Sara Wuska, continues to be essential to our seniors. This service is for ambulatory citizens of Vestavia Hills and it is structured and operated by volunteers through the Vestavia Hills Public Services department. Riders call on Monday to make their reservation(s) for the week – Tuesday and Thursdays are open for medical-related trips, while Wednesdays and Fridays are for errands around Vestavia Hills. Without faithful volunteers this service would not be available for the citizens who depend on it for their well-being. However, it is much more than just a ride to the doctor or a trip to the grocery store. It is conversation and fellowship with a caring individual; it is a physical and emotional support that otherwise would not be available; and it is all because of a VOLUNTEER! Julie Harper was one of the first volunteer drivers for this program. Ms. Harper eventually became an employee of the Vestavia Hills Parks and Recreation Department and continued to be a champion for

the program. She recently retired and is once again volunteering as a driver. Thank you, Ms. Harper, for your dedication to the Senior Transportation program from its initial beginnings and beyond!

A special luncheon to honor our volunteers was planned for this month. Recent circumstances required cancellation of the event but can not change the selfless acts of kindness that our volunteers provide. Without falter, our volunteers have continued to provide help and support to the senior adults in our community. Not thinking of themselves, but always willing to serve. So, thank you, volunteers, for all that you continue to do to ensure the seniors in our community are safe and well taken care of!



HIRING SUMMER LIFEGUARDS

We are looking for fun and energetic summer lifeguards to open the brand-new Vestavia Hills Aquatic Complex!

Meet new friends while earning good pay and working flexible hours in a fun environment. Not certified? No problem – American Red Cross lifeguard training will be provided. For more information, contact Jeff Corley at 205.978.0169 or jcorley@vhal.org.

NEW MERKEL HOUSE

The following information is accurate as of the print date of this publication.

The events and dates listed below are subject to change.

Monthly nutritional education, events and guest speakers; Games EVERYDAY!

Monday-Friday: Fun, Fellowship & Lunch (served at 11:45 a.m.)

Tuesday: Tai Chi & Table Games, 12:30 p.m.

Wednesday: Students from VHECH visit New Merkel House for “Getting to Know You” lunches

Thursday: Tech Talk Thursdays

Friday: Bingo, 11 a.m.

May 8: UWAAA Annual Senior Celebration, Birmingham CrossPlex

May 11: Art with Tina Chaffin

May 11: “Mother’s Memories” – share memories of your mother

May 25: Closed, Memorial Day

More information, including the **full calendar of Senior Programming activities**, is available on the City website at www.vhal.org/community/senior-living or by contacting Melanie Perry at 205.967.5977.



CHAMBER NEWS

Karen J. Odle, Vestavia Hills Chamber of Commerce President

Why we need to “Support our Local Businesses” NOW more than ever!

Last month was consumed with working with local businesses in figuring out how to cope with the closing of many of our businesses or adjusting to how they can continue to do business in what quickly became the “new normal.” There have been so many factors that have had major impact on our businesses – social distancing, some businesses being deemed ‘essential’ while others are not, no toilet paper on the grocery store shelves (what happened to milk and bread??) and many other things we never thought our ‘advanced’ society would ever have to deal with!

With the unprecedented challenge we have faced, from day one, all I could think about and pray about was “how in the world are these

small businesses going to remain viable with having to close their doors either partially or fully?”

My plea to all Vestavia Hills residents is to please make every effort to support these businesses as soon as we are released from the “shelter at home” order. This is their livelihood, the very fabric of our community, that helps provide both financial and community support of what we as citizens value – our educational system, our first responders, our public services, our library and many, many other things that would not be available without a strong economy. If you are wondering what you can do to help, this is the answer! Please support our local businesses! They DO make a difference!



2020 PROJECT REQUEST

The Vestavia Hills Chamber of Commerce and City of Vestavia Hills are planning the 6th annual Helping Hands in the Hills, a day of service in the city to assist our residents (senior citizens, disabled, etc.) who need a helping hand with minor projects around their home. This fun community service day will be Saturday, September 12, 2020. To submit a project for consideration, complete the form below and submit it to the Chamber of Commerce at 1975 Merryvale Road, Vestavia Hills, AL 35216. For more information or to volunteer, contact the Chamber of Commerce at 205.823.5011 or email betsyw@vestaviiahills.org.

DEADLINE FOR PROJECT REQUEST SUBMISSION: AUGUST 7, 2020

Your name* _____

Phone number* _____ E-mail* _____

Contact name* (Name of person in need, if different from above) _____

Project address* _____

Project description* _____

Number of hours required for 6-8 people to complete? _____

Homeowners must provide needed tools and supplies to complete project request, i.e. rakes, mower, trimmers, wheelbarrow, pine straw/mulch. Requests for pressure washing projects will NOT be considered.

Special instructions _____

**Required information*

VESTAVIA HILLS POLICE DEPARTMENT

YOUTH POLICE ACADEMY

June 8-11, 2020

The Vestavia Hills Police Department is proud to announce our annual Youth Police Academy opened to all Vestavia Hills youths, ages 12-16. We have partnered with local volunteers and sponsors to bring you a week of hands-on curriculum and challenges that will help you better understand your leadership role in our community. As you experience the many different challenges you will begin to understand the importance of problem solving and team building.

ARE YOU UP TO THE CHALLENGE?

A registration fee of \$50.00 per student is required, along with a completed application packet. **CLASS SIZE IS LIMITED.**

For registration information please contact Sgt. Eddie Crim at ecrim@vhal.org or you may call him at 205-978-0119.

Summer 2020-YPA Curriculum/Activities

- ◆ PT Challenges
- ◆ Team Challenges
- ◆ Problem Solving
- ◆ Crime Scene Investigation
- ◆ SWAT
- ◆ Self Defense
- ◆ Use of Force Simulator
- ◆ CPR Training



THANK YOU!

for your continued support of our Vestavia Hills businesses and employers!



SHOP LOCAL
in VESTAVIA HILLS



City NEWS

Keeping Vestavia Hills Connected & Informed

Have you registered to receive the bi-weekly digital newsletter from the City of Vestavia Hills? Sign up today so you won't miss a thing. It's easy! Visit www.vhal.org, scroll to the bottom of the home page and simply enter your email address to have the newsletter delivered directly to your inbox!

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WEEKENDS
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- Pharmacy

LIBRARY IN THE FOREST

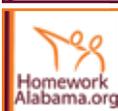
ACCESS DIGITAL RESOURCES 24/7!

The Library in the Forest is **CLOSED** this month, but our digital services are always open online at www.vestavialibrary.org! Discover our wide range of FREE digital resources that may be accessed from home with your library card — including eBooks, audiobooks, streaming movies, online databases and more. Having trouble accessing digital offerings? Call 205.978.0155 to get help from our librarians.

NEED A LIBRARY CARD?

No problem! For information on how to register online for a temporary library eCard, visit <https://vestavialibrary.org/alert-center> and scroll to “I don’t have a library card” in the FAQs.

	Enjoy critically-acclaimed movies, inspiring documentaries, award-winning foreign films and more!
	Universal Class offers more than 500 online non-college credit continuing education courses.
	Did you know the Library in the Forest has thousands of eBooks and audiobooks? You can borrow them, instantly, on your phone or tablet.
	Vestavia Hills residents can quickly download or stream movies, TV shows, music and audiobooks.

	Ancestry Library Edition brings the world’s most popular consumer online genealogy resource to your library.
	Duolingo makes it easy to learn a language. It’s 100% fun, science-based learning.
	Access live career and job search assistance, a writing lab, academic skills tutoring, and career and study resources.
	Log in with your library card for one-to-one homework help.

CASINO ROYALE WINS BIG!

The Vestavia Hills Library Foundation and Junior Board presented the Casino Royale Fundraising Gala at the Vestavia Hills Library in the Forest on Saturday, March 7, 2020. Nearly 200 guests attended the event benefitting the library’s children’s and teen departments and the VHLF endowment. This marked the sixth year of the event and the first time it was held since 2016.

“The Foundation board was so excited to partner with our Junior Board to bring Casino Royale back to the Library in the Forest,” said VHLF President June Clark, who conceptualized the event in 2012. “It was a tremendous success and everyone had a great time enjoying the fun of Vegas in Vestavia Hills.”

Casino Royale guests entered the library on a red carpet, surrounded by Vegas décor and the music of King Rooster. Bama Casino’s professional dealers led guests in rounds of blackjack, craps, roulette and money wheel games and their roaming photo booth captured shots of guests throughout the evening. The circulation desk was transformed into a bar serving complimentary wine and craft beer donated by International Wines & Craft Beer. The Ridge provided a full spread of delicious food in the library’s community room, where guests also found a wide array of silent auction items donated by generous local businesses. Vestavia Hills Dunkin’ provided complimentary late-night coffee and donut treats for all guests. CBS 42’s Alissa Rothermich served as emcee for the event, thanking sponsors and inviting guests to trade their chips in for prize tickets before announcing the winners. All guests received swag bags as they departed.

“I am truly thankful that the community came together again to support our great library,” said Taneisha Tucker, the Library Director. “The proceeds totaling more than \$10,000 will enable us to offer stellar programming to our children and teens along with supporting the Foundation’s goal to establish an endowment that will provide long-term support for the library.”

Thanks to all the organizers, sponsors, auction donors and guests who made the 2020 Casino Royale Fundraising Gala a winning night for everyone involved. Please visit vhlibraryfoundation.org for a full list of sponsors, to see photos from the event and to learn more about VHLF and the Junior Board.

The Vestavia Hills Library Foundation is currently accepting applications for community members to serve on its Board of Directors. Please visit vhlibraryfoundation.org to download and complete an application prior to June 1, 2020. You may also visit the website to make a tax-deductible donation to the Library in the Forest today. Your generous support is greatly appreciated!



FOUNDATION
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LIBRARY IN THE FOREST



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**PROVIDING THE
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As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Vestavia Hills Fire Department has made changes to its day-to-day operations. Some of these changes include preventing visitations (including our own families) to all fire stations, cancelling CPR classes and monitoring the temperature of our personnel twice per day. These measures may seem extreme, but we want our personnel and citizens to know that we are taking this pandemic seriously.

We are hoping to return to our normal routine as soon as allowed and, in the meantime, respectfully ask for your patience. Through all of the changes to our daily lives, be assured that the goal of the VHFD remains the same – to provide the best service possible while ensuring the health and safety of our personnel and citizens.

Alabama
**Census
2020**



BE COUNTED, VESTAVIA HILLS!

Be counted, Vestavia Hills!

Responding to the census helps our community get the funding we need! Census data impacts our daily lives for years to come. Lawmakers allocate more than \$675 billion in federal funding back to states and local communities each year based on census data – funding for critical services and infrastructure in our community, including roads, schools, fire and police departments, businesses, hospitals and healthcare, senior centers, jobs and political representation. **Census responses are safe and secure and cannot be used against you.**

For more information, visit www.census.gov.

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