

COMMUNITY NEWS

News & Events for the City of Vestavia Hills • December 2018/January 2019

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

COMMUNITY CALENDAR

December 2018

- 6 Design Review Board
Executive Conference Room, 6 p.m.
- 8 Breakfast with Santa
Vestavia Hills Civic Center, 7:30 a.m.
- 9 Christmas Parade & Celebration
Liberty Park, 2 p.m.
- 10 Senior Citizens Luncheon
Dogwood Room, 11:30 a.m.
- 10 City Council Meeting
Council Chamber, 6 p.m.
- 11 Chamber Luncheon
Vestavia Country Club, 11:30 a.m.
- 13 Friends of the Library
Library in the Forest, 10 a.m.
- 13 Planning and Zoning Commission
Council Chamber, 6 p.m.
- 17 Council Work Session
Executive Conference Room, 5 p.m.
- 17 City Council Meeting
Council Chamber, 6 p.m.
- 20 Board of Zoning Adjustment
Council Chamber, 6 p.m.
- 24 Municipal Offices Closed
Christmas Eve
- 25 Municipal Offices Closed
Christmas Day
- 31 Municipal Offices Closed
New Year's Eve

– **Calendar** continued on page 5



MAYOR'S MESSAGE

Ashley C. Curry, Vestavia Hills Mayor

By now you have seen construction underway at Wald Park. I have been asked many questions regarding the plans for the park. As they are approved, schematic renderings of the improvements to Wald Park, Cahaba Heights (ballfields, park area and New Merkel House) and Liberty Park are posted on the City's website at <https://vhal.org/community/city-projects/> so that you can follow the progress of the Infrastructure and Community Spaces Plan as we proceed.

As you may have heard, next year is the bicentennial year for the State of Alabama. During 2019 we will join many cities in celebrating our state's history. We will also plan to have events to commemorate our City's history. Already we have received recognition from the State of Alabama Bicentennial Commission for our bicentennial-related activities planned for next year:



CITY MANAGER'S REPORT

Jeff Downes, Vestavia Hills City Manager

The wonderful holiday season is upon us, and it offers many things to be happy about. Gathering with family and friends, faith focused worship and just some well-earned rest and recreation are a few thoughts that come to mind. The mere fact that we are reaching the end of the year offers time for reflection. Recently, I met with a group from Leadership Vestavia Hills who were asking a number of questions about the history of the Vestavia Hills government. They had the goal of producing a video to address the evolution of our governmental structure and historical leaders. These questions prompted me to reflect upon a few of our historical milestones and colorful leaders since the City's founding. I want to highlight a few of these thoughts in my article this month to complement the happiness of the season from a City perspective.

- OLLI (Osher Lifelong Learning Institute) will offer a series of programs regarding Alabama's history and stories of individuals and events that shaped the colorful history of Alabama politics.
- The Beautification Board will host events this spring to celebrate our City and state.
- The Historical Society has planned "Lunch & Learn" opportunities highlighting our City's history.
- Library in the Forest will feature an exhibit regarding our state's history and the 2019 Summer Reading program will emphasize Alabama history.
- A birthday celebration to address the 69th birthday of Vestavia Hills.

There will be other events planned as we move into next year. I hope that you will participate in the celebration of our state and our city.

– **Mayor's Message** continued on page 3

Did you know that Vestavia Hills' focus on creation of a superb educational system met with the scrutiny of judicial arbiters only to receive approval with strong concurrence by those that initially questioned the creation of such in the civil litigation process? That system is now the envy of cities all across Alabama who work hard at replicating its success. Did you know that the "legislative annexation" of Liberty Park in the early 1990s was one of the first attempts by a city to grow in such a manner? That effort has proved to be a major boost for our City's economic sustainability and has been strategically utilized by several other cities across Alabama. Did you know that cities across Alabama including Madison and Fairhope are actively studying our governmental structure for long-term success in their communities? This is clearly

– **Manager's Report** continued on page 3



FROM THE SUPERINTENDENT

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

Diversity Strengthens Community

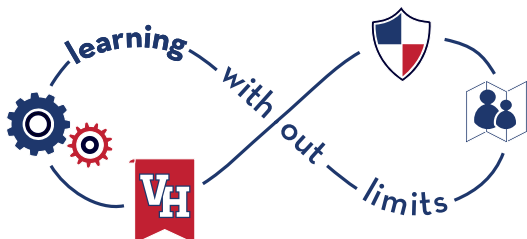
During the fall semester, I had the privilege of attending the World Languages National Honor Society induction ceremony at Vestavia Hills High School. The event recognized more than 150 students who met the rigorous qualifications for membership. We also recognized 56 seniors who had earned the prestigious Seal of Biliteracy, meaning they distinguished themselves as proficient in at least two languages. It was a great morning to celebrate the role of world languages and diversity in our schools and community.

Students in Vestavia Hills City Schools have the opportunity to learn Spanish, German, French, Latin and American Sign Language. Our students are intentional in scheduling these courses knowing that exposure to different cultures and languages is beneficial in their future endeavors. Lisa Garrison, World Languages Department Chair at VHHS says, "This exposure to the kaleidoscope of cultures and languages empowers our students to identify the similarities and value the differences in our ever-changing world."

An astounding 91 percent of our graduates this past year took at least one world language while 12 percent earned the Seal of Biliteracy. Experiences in these languages expose students to the richness of different cultures around the world. Mrs. Garrison goes on to say that immersion in a world language "empowers our students to be respectful and responsible global citizens, who are equipped to build our community and interact in a multicultural world."

Another wonderful benefit of being a part of Vestavia Hills is that students can learn from the diversity within our schools and community. There are 54 different languages represented and spoken among our students. Our census data shows that we have citizens who were born in the Americas, Asia, Europe and Africa. This broad international representation provides a unique opportunity to develop the appreciation of diversity that prepares our students to be successful global citizens.

Webster's defines diversity as "the condition of having or being composed of differing elements." In Vestavia Hills, we believe that diversity strengthens community. It is a cornerstone upon which our nation is built and one that melds the richness of our American way of life. It is these differing elements that help make our home a special place.



FRESHMAN SERVES AS DIABETES WALK AMBASSADOR

More than two dozen Vestavia Hills students have been diagnosed with Type 1 diabetes. Their cause was highlighted during the month of November through Diabetes Awareness Month. Vestavia Hills High School freshman Ben Harwell was selected as Ambassador for the Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation's One Walk event in Birmingham in November. Faculty and staff members from several schools participated in the event, and Vestavia Hills Elementary East and West were both highlighted as top school fundraisers for donating more than \$14,000 to the JDRF.



RAISING FUNDS FOR MIRACLE LEAGUE FIELD

Students at Vestavia Hills High School are raising money this fall to help bring the game of baseball to children with disabilities. VHHS students selected the Miracle League Field project with the Vestavia Hills Parks and Recreation Foundation as their fall charity. The field, which will be built at Wald Park, provides children with physical and/or mental challenges the opportunity to play baseball as a team member in an organized league. Through various activities and fundraisers during Homecoming Week, students raised more than \$23,000 for the Miracle League Field project. Fundraisers will continue this fall as students work to bring awareness to this worthy cause.



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Mayor's Message *continued from page 1*

As we continue the holiday season I ask our citizens to think of others and help those that are less fortunate than we are. Our City employees certainly understand what it means to give of their time and their money. Employees increased their contributions to the United Way by 35% over last year. Additionally, they volunteer with the Greater Birmingham Big Brothers/Big Sisters organization in hosting a workplace mentoring program for inner city youth. I am inspired by our City employees and encourage our citizens to follow their example.

Whatever you decide to do to help others will be rewarding and your lives will be enriched. The old adage, "it is better to give than to receive" is true. On behalf of our council members and City employees, I wish you a joyous holiday season.

Manager's Message *continued from page 1*

not an exhaustive list, but it does represent a fact that Vestavia Hills is looked at as a leader amongst municipalities in Alabama and the region.

Our elected leadership has consistently focused their efforts with creativity and persistence in moving our community in the correct manner. Former Mayor Sara Wuska was widely quoted as saying that our government should "care" about its residents in all of its actions. She was instrumental in beginning a senior transportation program that is in existence to this day. It instills a personal touch within governmental operations. Former Mayor Pat Reynolds focused on opportunities for growth and quality of life improvements including the aforementioned annexation of Liberty Park and the creation of the Liberty Park athletic fields. Former Mayor Scotty McCallum brought incredible, inclusive leadership qualities that produced results some saw as almost insurmountable, including a series of committees that restructured the way City decisions were made, the annexation of Cahaba Heights and the construction of SHAC just to name a few. Former Mayor Butch Zaragoza brought a priceless knowledge of the City's operations to create a fine tuned organization based upon his years of service to the City. Furthermore, his steady and stable qualities calmed everyone as the City faced storms and organizational change. All of these leaders brought incredible talent to make us who we are today.

I smile when I think about how each of these leaders built upon the successes of their predecessors. They were all different yet all focused on the betterment of Vestavia Hills. Now, as we move from 2018 to 2019, we have our current group of leaders for our City who have goals and objectives that are based upon the desires of residents and focused on delivering improved recreational, civic and infrastructure assets. They, too, are building on the successes of the past. I hope everyone's personal recollection of this history and anticipation of the future brings smiles to their faces as well. Merry Christmas, happy holidays and have a great new year.



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

Visit www.vestaviahills.org for an extended list of events.

Breakfast with Santa

December 8

**Vestavia Hills Civic Center, 7:30-10:00 am
1975 Merryvale Road**

Bring the whole family for a pancake breakfast with Santa! Free to attend-Breakfast courtesy of the City of Vestavia Hills.

Vestavia Hills Christmas Parade & Celebration

December 9

**Liberty Park Sports Complex
to Alston Meadows, 2:00-4:00 pm**

Enjoy the city's official parade followed by the Liberty Park Christmas Celebration with kids' activities, refreshments, music, pictures with Santa and more!



CHAMBER NEWS

Karen J. Odle, Vestavia Hills Chamber of Commerce President

As we come to the close of another year, I want to take this opportunity to thank the many wonderful people who spend countless hours making our community a better place for all. Our

citizens continue to amaze me with their energy and focus on making Vestavia Hills a great place to work, play and live.

Please continue to support our local businesses. There are 30.2 million small businesses in the U.S. (SBA, 2018). If you spend \$100 at a local business, approximately \$67 stays in your local economy. Whereas, if you spend the same at a large business, only \$32 stays in the local economy (Business Alliance for Local Living Economies).

Remember that small businesses:

- are the life blood of any community.
- account for 99.9% of all businesses in the U.S. (SBA, 2018)
- employ roughly 58.9 million people, and make up 47.5% of the private workforce. (SBA, 2018)
- donate 250% more than larger businesses to non-profits and community causes. (Seattle Good Business Network)
- are experiencing severe hiring issues due to an all-time low unemployment rate.

I quote all of these statistics to help our residents understand what a wonderful opportunity we have to help our Vestavia Hills small business owners thrive and grow by supporting them. Please consider supporting local businesses instead of going outside of our city to

make purchases. Our small businesses are the first to be approached when we need a school carnival donation, an athletic donation or any other donation for local causes that we all feel passionately about. I implore you to support our local businesses. YOU can make a difference!

My family and I would like to wish you and yours a blessed holiday season, and abundant peace and joy. May 2019 be a year blessed with good health and prosperity for each of you. As always, our doors are open at the Chamber and we look forward to working with you as we strive for "A Life Above."

JOIN THE HISTORICAL SOCIETY!

Are you interested in helping preserve the history of Vestavia Hills? Joining is easy and inexpensive – only \$20 per person! Membership checks may be mailed to: Vestavia Hills Historical Society; 1221 Montgomery Highway; Vestavia Hills, AL 35216 or bring it in person to our upcoming meeting on January 28, 2019 at 2 p.m. at the Library in the Forest. You will hear from VHHS graduate and marble sculptor, Craigger Browne. Be sure to follow us on Facebook for information on upcoming events, historical photos, interesting stories and more!

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Give a Christmas blessing to those who are *homeless* for the holidays.



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VHFD ACCEPTING DONATIONS



The Vestavia Hills Fire Department has once again partnered with the

United States Marine Corps Reserve and the Toys for Tots program this Christmas season. The mission of the Toys for Tots program is to collect new unwrapped toys and distribute those toys to less fortunate children at Christmas. Off-duty VHFD fire fighters will handle all of the logistics required to get your donation to the Toys for Tots distribution center so that it reaches a deserving child on Christmas morning. **If you wish to donate, simply drop a new unwrapped toy by any VHFD fire station by December 15, and we will take care of the rest.** As always, we thank you for your support! Merry Christmas!

Calendar *continued from page 1*

January 2019

- 1 Municipal Offices Closed – New Year’s Day
- 3 Design Review Board – Executive Conference Room, 6 p.m.
- 8 Chamber Luncheon – Vestavia Country Club, 11:30 a.m.
- 10 Planning and Zoning Commission – Council Chamber, 6 p.m.
- 14 Beautification Board Meeting – Council Chamber, 9 a.m.
- 14 Senior Citizens Luncheon – Dogwood Room, 11:30 a.m.
- 14 City Council Meeting – Council Chamber, 6 p.m.
- 15 Parks and Recreation Board – Executive Conference Room, 7 a.m.
- 17 Board of Zoning Adjustment – Council Chamber, 6 p.m.
- 21 Municipal Offices Closed – Martin Luther King, Jr. Day
- 23 Library Board Meeting – Library in the Forest, 4 p.m.
- 24 Friends of the Library – Library in the Forest, 10 a.m.
- 28 City Council Meeting – Council Chamber, 6 p.m.



Fairhaven Drive & Poe Drive at Overton Village

Coming Soon!
3 New Homes!

Single Family Homes

Vestavia Hills

Townhomes

The Cove at Overton

3 Vestavia Lots
2 Mtn Brook Lots

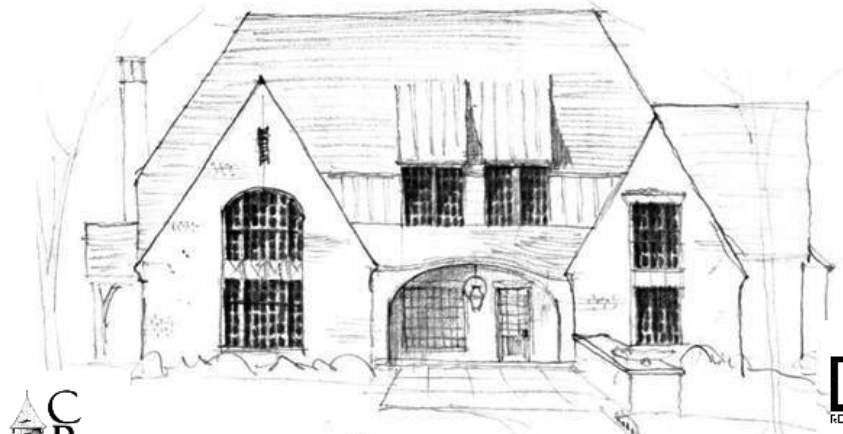


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PARKS & RECREATION NEWS

SPRING SPORTS

Baseball – www.vhyb.com

VHYB provides recreational baseball opportunities for youth living in Vestavia Hills and the surrounding areas. Registration is open now through January 20, 2019. Practices begin in February with league games beginning in March through May. For more information or to register, visit www.vhyb.com.

Lacrosse – www.vestavialax.com

Registration for Vestavia Lacrosse spring season is open now through December 15 for boys and girls divisions 8U-high school. For more information or to register, visit www.vestavialax.com.

Soccer – www.vestaviasoccer.com

Vestavia Hills Soccer Club offers programs for all levels of play for boys and girls ages 3-19. Registration is open now. For more information or to register, visit www.vestaviasoccer.com.

Softball – www.vhgsa.com

VHGSA is open to all girls ages 4-12. Evaluations will be held in early February and opening day will be in mid-March. Registration opens December 1. For more information or to register, visit www.vhgsa.com.

NEW MERKEL SENIOR CENTER

Monthly programs, 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

Wednesday & Friday: Bingo, 11:00 a.m.

Thursday: Tech Talk Thursdays

December 11: Art with Tina Chaffin

December 21: Christmas Celebration

December 24-January 1: Closed, Happy Holidays

More information, including the **full calendar of Senior Programming activities**, can be found on the City website at <https://vhal.org/community/senior-living/> or by contacting Melanie Perry at 205.967.5977.



SHARE THE HOLIDAYS IN A NEW HOME

Liberty Park is a welcoming hometown where families can truly settle down. The homes are thoughtfully designed for comfort with spacious floor plans, energy-efficient technologies and quality finishes. Come explore newly finished model homes and consider giving your family the gift of a lifetime this holiday.

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LIBRARY IN THE FOREST

CHILDREN: 205.978.0158

- M* **Toddler A-Go-Go.** 9:30 & 10:30 a.m. Community Room.
- Tu* **P.J. Storytime.** 6:30 p.m. Children's Program Room.
- W* **Story Friends.** 10:30 a.m. Children's Program Room.
- Th* **L.I.F.T. (Library in the Forest Time).** 9:30 a.m. Children's Program Room
- Th* **Book Babies.** 10 a.m. Treehouse (*Registration suggested*)
 - 1* **Ms. Casey's Marvelous Music and Movement.** 10:30 a.m. Children's Program Room
 - 5* **This & That: Gingerbread Making Competition.** 3:30 p.m. Children's Program Room
 - 12* **This & That: Christmas Crafts.** 3:30 p.m. Children's Program Room
 - 15* **Ms. Casey's Marvelous Music and Movement.** 10:30 a.m. Children's Program Room
 - 18* **Santa!** 6p.m. Community Room
 - 19* **This & That: Christmas Fun.** 3:30 p.m. Children's Program Room

TEENS: 205.978.3683 (Grades 6-12)

- 4* **Dystopia Fandom Night.** 4 p.m. Community Room
- 5* **Flake Fest.** 4 p.m. Treehouse
- 7* **Open Gaming.** 4 p.m. Community Room
- 11* **Fortnite Night.** 4 p.m. Community Room
- 12* **Writing Group.** 4 p.m. Historical Room
- 13* **Extended Library Hours** until 9 p.m. Study Breaks at 3 p.m., 5 p.m. & 7 p.m. Historical Room
- 14* **Open Gaming.** 4 p.m. Community Room
- 17* **Extended Library Hours** until 9 p.m. Study Breaks at 3 p.m., 5 p.m. & 7 p.m. Historical Room
- 18* **Extended Library Hours** until 9 p.m. Study Breaks at 3 p.m., 5 p.m. & 7 p.m. Historical Room
- 19* **Teen Art Group.** 4 p.m. Treehouse
- 21* **Super Smash Bros. Ultimate Tournament.** 4 p.m. Community Room

ADULTS: 205.978.4678 (Ages 18+)

- 3* **Knit Night in the Forest.** 6 p.m. Treehouse
- 5* **Treehouse Poetry Reading Series.** 6 p.m. Treehouse
- 7* **First Friday Fiber Arts.** 10 a.m. Treehouse
- 7* **OLLI Presents: The Iran Nuclear Agreement.** 1:30 p.m. Community Room
- 10* **Tai Chi for Beginners.** 6 p.m. Community Room
- 12* **ABCs of Medicare.** 1 p.m. Treehouse
- 13* **Tai Chi: Beginner & Intermediate.** 2 p.m. Community Room
- 13* **Read & Feed Book Group.** 6:30 p.m. Taziki's Liberty Park
- 20* **OLLI Presents: The 1960s.** 1:30 p.m. Community Room
- 27* **Tai Chi: Beginner & Intermediate.** 2 p.m. Community Room

MAKERSPACE/TECHNOLOGY: 205.978.4679

- 4* **Microsoft PowerPoint.** 10 a.m. Electronic Classroom
- 11* **Apple Mobile Devices with Tech Ease.** 2 p.m. Children's Program Room
- 12* **Mac 101.** 2 p.m. Electronic Classroom
- 13* **Windows 10.** 4 p.m. Electronic Classroom

NEED SOME EXTRA TIME?

Do you need extra time to study for exams? The library will be open until 9 p.m. on December 13, 17 and 18. If you need a break from studying on these days, the Teen Department is offering 30 minute study breaks at 3 p.m., 5 p.m. and 7 p.m. with snacks and games!



SANTA CLAUS IS COMING TO TOWN!

Santa Claus will be visiting the Vestavia Hills Library in the Forest on Tuesday, December 18th. Make plans to visit Santa as he shares his favorite stories from the North Pole! Children are invited to visit with Santa after the program, so

bring your cameras. Dinner will start at 6p.m. and the show will begin at 6:30p.m.

BEAUTIFICATION BOARD

CHRISTMAS YARD JUDGING

Vestavia Hills Beautification Board members will conduct the annual Christmas yard judging December 10-17, 2018. Yards are judged on appearance in both daytime and evening time periods. Winners in each of the areas will be awarded a certificate of thanks from the Mayor's office and will host a "Winning Yard" sign until the end of the month. Happy decorating!



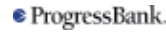
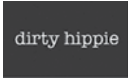
Calling all former Vestavia Belles

2019 marks the 40th anniversary for Vestavia Belles and plans are underway to celebrate all former Belles during our annual Dogwood Luncheon. Please mark your calendar for April 25, 2019 and make plans to join us. For further information, visit us online at www.vestaviabeautiful.com, on Facebook at Vestavia Hills Beautification or contact Gina Henley at gghenley401@charter.net or 205.910.4837.



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VESTAVIA HILLS
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Christmas Season

at Vestavia Hills United Methodist Church

Magic City Nutcracker
 November 30 - December 2

Service of Lessons and Carols
 December 10 / 8:30, 9:45 & 11:00 am

Sounds of the Season
 December 16 / 5:00 pm

Service of Healing and Light
 December 21 / 6:00 pm

Christmas Eve Services
 December 24 /
 2pm, 4pm, 6pm, 8pm, 11pm

Christmas Day Lunch
 December 25 / 11:30pm

For more information
 on events visit
vhumc.org