

The Valhalla Viking

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DECEMBER 2009

Valhalla Community School K-9 publicly funded charter school

2008 was an historical year for our community of Valhalla Centre. After generations of struggle to keep the school viable, the community banded together around an idea that has developed into a vibrant K-9 publicly funded charter school, now known as **Valhalla Community School**, which is operated by the Valhalla School Foundation.

Valhalla Community School is northern Alberta's first rural charter school. **Its unique charter focus is one of rural leadership.** Community involvement is what has kept Valhalla afloat through the years and the school aims to teach children the mechanics of community organizations including things like parliamentary procedure and committee work.

With this in mind, VCS staff and several community members recently took part in a training session to become qualified 4H Club leaders. **All VCS stu-**

dents in grade 5 and higher will soon be participating members of a 4H Multi-club delivered as part of the school's leadership and public speaking studies.

To support the leadership focus, we have also placed a strong emphasis on academics by implementing **traditional-style, teacher-directed instruction** in all classes.

Recognizing a recent desire for German language instruction amongst the people in the area, VCS teaches Alberta's first-ever **German Second Language (GSL) program with instruction beginning in kindergarten.**



**Valhalla
Community School**

Currently, second language instruction in Alberta typically begins in grade 4. But the Valhalla School Foundation has committed to develop new Alberta curriculum for German instruction in kindergarten to grade 12. It will be **the first of its kind in Alberta** for German instruction and is an exciting made-in-Valhalla venture!

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STAYING CONNECTED

Since the opening of VCS as a charter school, it has become more important than ever to stay connected.

Every charter school has a mandate to keep its stakeholders informed of its activities.

This newsletter is meant to be a combined community group effort. Over time, we'll include news from other groups in town, but since the school has been the biggest news lately, the first edition will be dedicated to it.

VCS RURAL LEADERSHIP CHARTER

- Traditional Teaching
- 4H Parliamentary Procedure & Public Speaking
- Second Language in all grades
- Cultural Knowledge: etiquette, music and more

Charter Schools

Right now, Alberta is the only province in Canada with Charter School legislation.

Charter school funding is calculated using the exact same per-student base rate as mainstream public schools. There is no tuition.

They are designed to act as educational innovators by trying out a creative educational idea in a one-school setting. This small-style "school district" provides flexibility for the board, administrators and staff to do whatever

Charter school funding is calculated using the exact same per-student base rate as mainstream public schools.

necessary to provide an excellent, cohesive program for the students while working to make positive changes to public education.

In other parts of the province, when charter schools have started in an area, the mainstream public school boards often take up the challenge and begin delivering specialized programs to their students.

For more information on charter schools in Alberta, visit the website of The Alberta Association of Public Charter Schools at www.taapcs.ca VCS is currently featured on their website.

The Valhalla Community School Bus Fleet

Without buses bringing the kids to school, the hallways would be pretty quiet during the day.

When Valhalla Community School first opened its doors in September 2008, 47 students were registered. By the end of the year, we were up to 65.

Now, in 2009, 97 children in kindergarten to grade 8 attend Valhalla Community School!

To accommodate the larger student population, the Valhalla Heritage Society purchased 4 brand new school buses, which are leased and operated by the Valhalla School Foundation. We are very fortunate to have such an excellent transportation team.

Currently, Valhalla buses cover the local area and also run east to Buffalo Lakes, west to Good-

fare, and south to Beaverlodge.

The buses have kept busy over the last two years, safely delivering students to school, field trips, swim lessons and extra-curricular sporting events.

Special thanks go to **Devon and Conoco**, who each made a contribution toward the bus payments.

The Valhalla Heritage Society is a charitable organization, licensed to issue tax receipts. If you are seeking a tax shelter that will help a worthy cause, a donation to the Valhalla Heritage Society for the bus project is a great way to directly help the school make their bus payments, while reaping the benefits of a tax deduction.

For those with corporate affiliations, donor recognition in the

form of advertisement on the buses is available. For details, contact information is below:

Cheques can be made payable to:
"Valhalla Heritage Society"

Box 52 Valhalla Centre, AB T0H 3M0
* * *

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780-356-2402

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780-356-2403

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780-356-2114



Community Support

During our first year of operation VCS was pleased to accept nearly 20 students after the provincial school population fund

ing date had passed. Despite this increase in expense, the school was able to finish the year within budget thanks to a

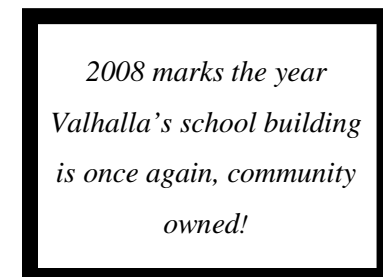
diligent admin team, as well as several community supporters:

Valhalla Heritage Society

a) **Building Purchase:** VHS purchased the school building from Peace Wapiti School Division, so with thanks to this busy and willing group, the school building is once again fully owned by the people of Valhalla. The Valhalla School Foundation leases the building from the Heritage Society.

b) **Bus Fleet:** As previously mentioned, the Valhalla School Foundation operates a fleet of 4 school buses, also leased from the Heritage Society. Bus routes serve Bea-

verlodge, Goodfare, Buffalo Lakes and Valhalla.



c) **Hospitality:** Many a meeting has taken place in the back room of the Heritage Society's Melsness Mercantile. School business is hungry work and an order of homemade cinnamon buns or chicken noodle soup does wonders for a lunch meeting!

Valhalla Community Library

One of the most cumbersome aspects of starting a school is stocking a library.

We are so very thankful to continue to provide a space for the Valhalla Community Library inside the school building where community members and students alike gather and make good use of the excellent collection there.

Head Librarian: Gail Perry
Box 68
Valhalla Centre, AB
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Phone: 780-356-3834

Financial Donors

The Valhalla School Foundation is also very grateful for the generous financial donations from many personal contributors as well as several community and corporate sponsors through various financial gifts and grants:

Bethany Banner Historical Society

County of Grande Prairie

Peter Martens

MTK Ventures

Weiso Acres

Paul & Aimee Gibson

Trans Canada Pipeline

TOG Systems Ltd.



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Northern Alberta's First Rural Leadership Charter School

This publication has been written, printed and edited as a shared effort between the Valhalla School Foundation, Valhalla Heritage Society and Valhalla's Communities in Bloom committee.

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TA, Grade 5/6: Marie Lumley

Custodian: Lorraine Gerow

Communities in Bloom: Valhalla receives 5!

Valhalla's Communities in Bloom committee was thrilled to learn they received 5 Blooms in the 2009 provincial competition.

What's more, the community of Valhalla has been invited to **compete nationally** in the 2010 competition.

The community's success in forming the charter school was given as the reason that tipped the balance toward such honors.

Valhalla is the first rural community in Alberta to advance to this level.

Each year Communities in Bloom sends representatives to evaluate a community based on 8 key criteria: tidiness, com-

displays and turf grass management.

In past years, rural communities in the County of Grande Prairie have begun participating. The judges are treated to the best of the area and then offer commendations, feedback and ideas for future development.



community involvement, environmental awareness, natural and cultural heritage conservation, urban forestry, landscaped areas, floral

Special thanks to everyone who works so hard to make the Valhalla Centre area a great place to live. Whether it be by tidying up your own space or working away at some community project, there are many reasons to take pride in our small community.