



ANNUAL REPORT

2023-2024



Valley Forge
Educational Services

The Vanguard School • Adult & Recreation Services



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Mission

Valley Forge Educational Services prepares children and adults with special needs to realize their potential as contributing members of the community.

Vision

VFES, in partnership with the community, will develop and implement comprehensive educational, clinical, employment, recreational and social programs for people with special needs so that each individual is offered an equal opportunity for an independent and meaningful life.



***Vanguard definition - 1. A group of people leading the way in new development or ideas.
2. The forefront in any movement, field, activity or the like.***

As we celebrate and look back on the 2023–24 fiscal year, it is easy to understand why the signature program of Valley Forge Educational Services that opened its doors as The Mainline Remedial Education Center in 1959 was rebranded as The Vanguard School in 1963. For 64 years we have been at the vanguard of services for students and adults with disabilities, focusing on their education, and providing employment support and recreational experiences for students and adults. This past year featured examples of how we remain a leader and innovator, always looking for new and exciting ways to engage the students and adults we serve. Sixty-four years later, I am happy to report that the mission remains as strong as ever and we continue to lead and explore new and creative ways to serve our population.

We are at the vanguard of education at The Vanguard School, which serves over 240 students with a diagnosis of autism, intellectual disability, speech and language impairment, specific learning disability and emotional disturbance. Over 50 school districts send their children to The Vanguard School, which is divided into four programmatic areas: Elementary School, Middle School, High School and the Vanguard Transition Center (VTC). Our administrators, teachers, therapists, counselors and psychologists are highly and specially trained to work with the individual needs of our students, making our 32-acre campus a dynamic place and an oasis of learning for the students who come here. Students not only focus on academics and life skills, but they experience art, music and drama and can be part of our musicals and talent shows we put on every year. To see the students as they traverse our campus between our many program spaces is to see them in a comfortable, accepting place—a place like home.

We are at the vanguard of services that equip students with the skills they need to seek and find employment upon graduation. In fact, the VTC was designed specifically to provide a bridge for students from high school graduation to age 22 with the goal of preparing them to become as independent as possible.

One of the major goals we have for our students is to support them beyond their school years in seeking meaningful employment opportunities. This begins with life skills throughout every level, but the focus on job skills really kicks in when students reach middle school and high school.

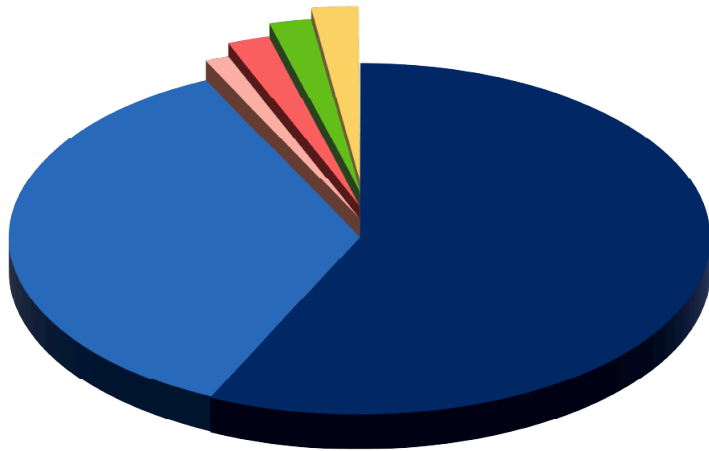
We are at the vanguard of our adult and recreation programs, which includes our supported employment service, Customized Workforce Solutions (CWS), and our recreational and social programs. CWS coordinates both job seeking and job placements for both Vanguard School graduates and adults with disabilities age 22+ who require employment support. Our Employment Specialists work with adult participants to support them in obtaining competitive employment. Our adult participants can also engage with their peers at monthly dances, meetups and other activities, like retreats, that are held throughout the year. These activities are designed to connect adults with disabilities and provide them with a sense of independence, fun and adventure throughout their adult lives.

There are so many reasons why VFES is at the vanguard of special education, recreation, adult social activities and employment! Sixty-four years ago, our founder, Dr. Milton Brutton, saw a need and began to innovate. That need continues so our work must continue, as well. Thank you for your continued support. Enjoy this report on our 2023–24 fiscal year. We look forward to your faithful partnership as we forge ahead to an exciting new chapter!

With Warm Regards,

**Thomas Quinn,
Executive Director**

Financials

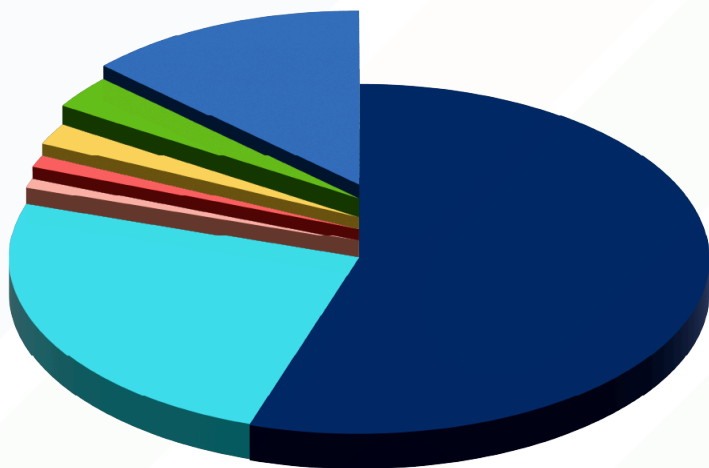
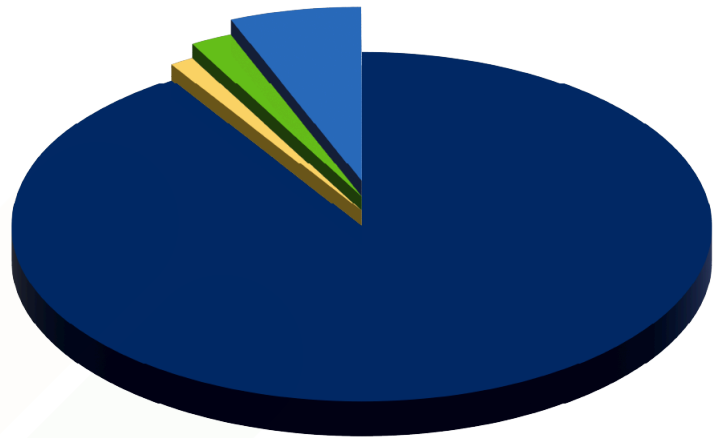


Sources of Revenue

- Local School Districts **57%**
- PA Dept of Education **36%**
- Adult & Student Recreation **2%**
- Fundraising **2%**
- Investment Income **2%**
- Supported Employment Services **1%**

Revenue Allocated by Primary Programming

- The Vanguard School **91%**
- Extended School Year **6%**
- Adult & Student Recreation **2%**
- Supported Employment Services **1%**



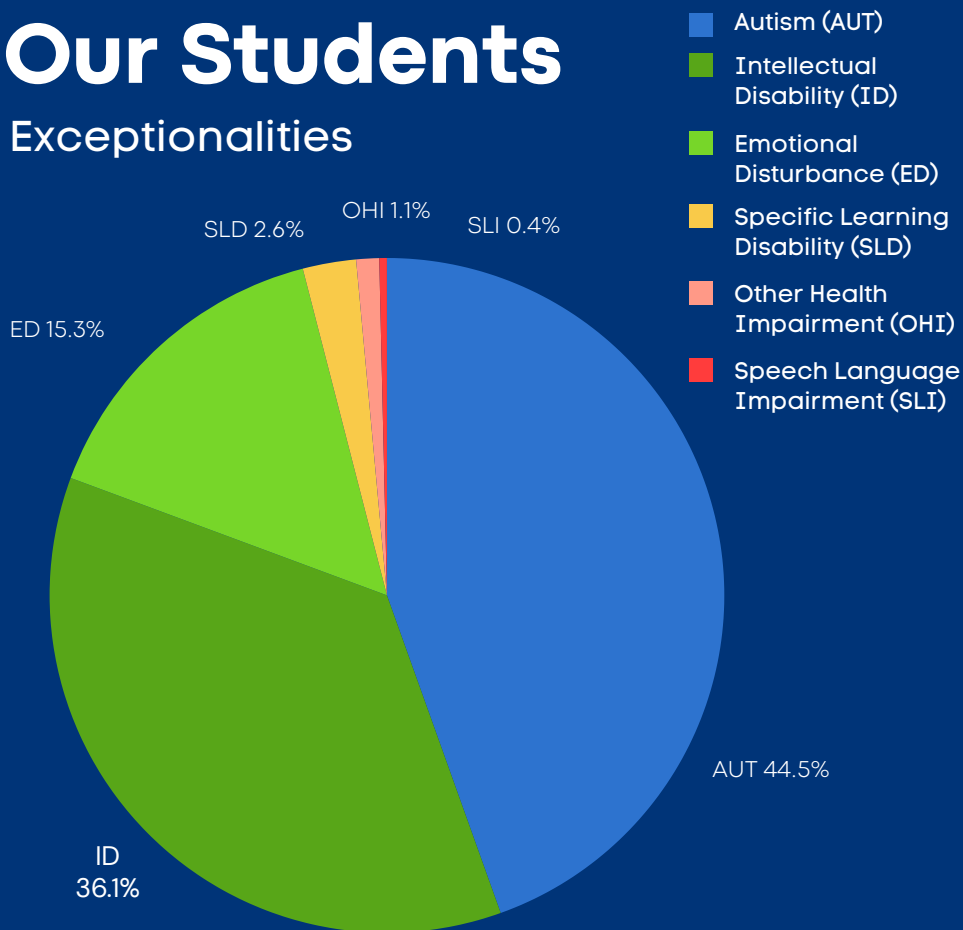
Functional Expenses

- Instructional **55%**
- Student Support Services **25%**
- Administrative **13%**
- Extended School Year **3%**
- Supported Employment Services **2%**
- Adult & Student Recreation **1%**
- Fundraising **1%**

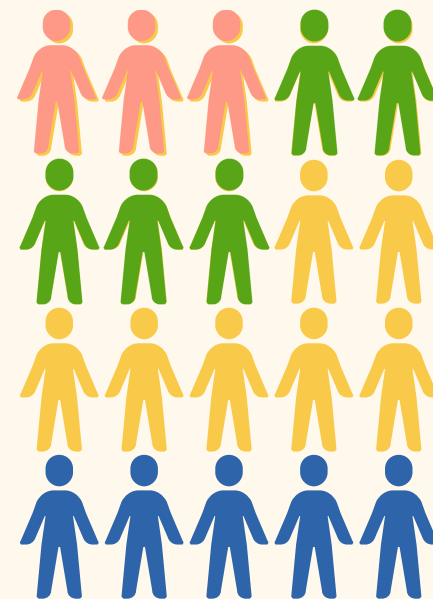
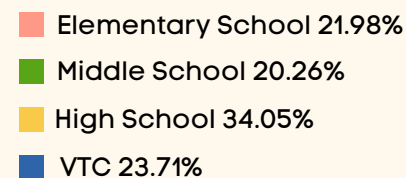
Audited financial statements may be obtained from the Business Office at 610.296.6725 x125

Our Students

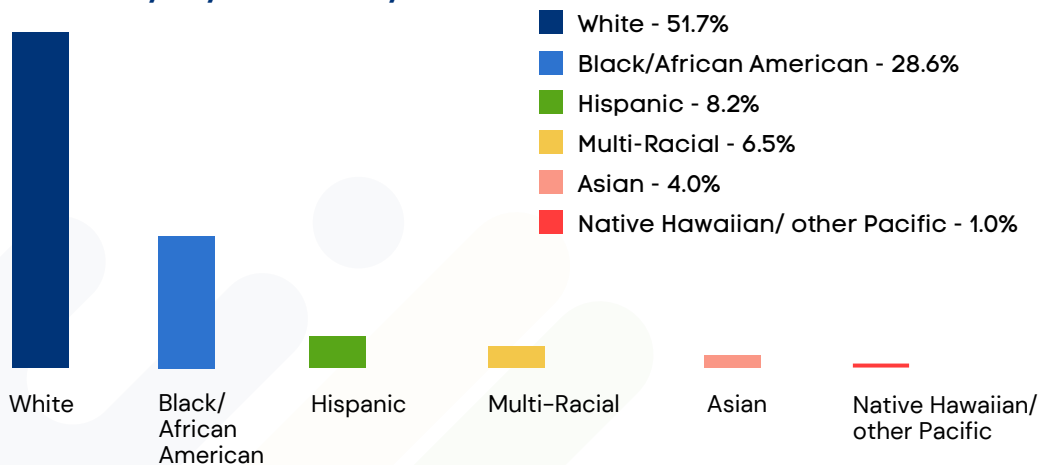
Exceptionalities



Diversity by Student Population



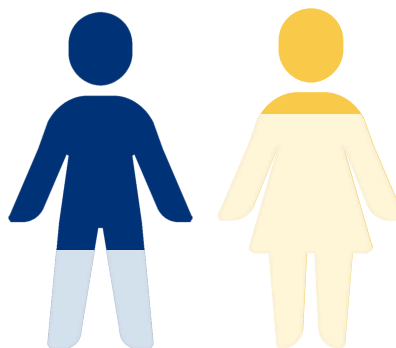
Diversity By Ethnicity



Diversity By Gender

Males in Student Population - 178
Females in Student Population - 54

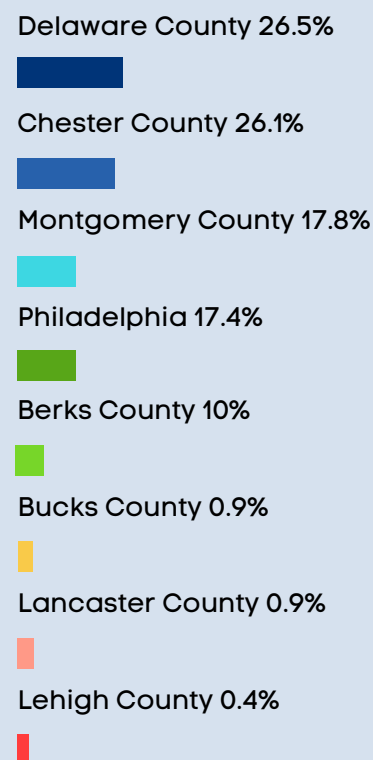
232 Students In Total



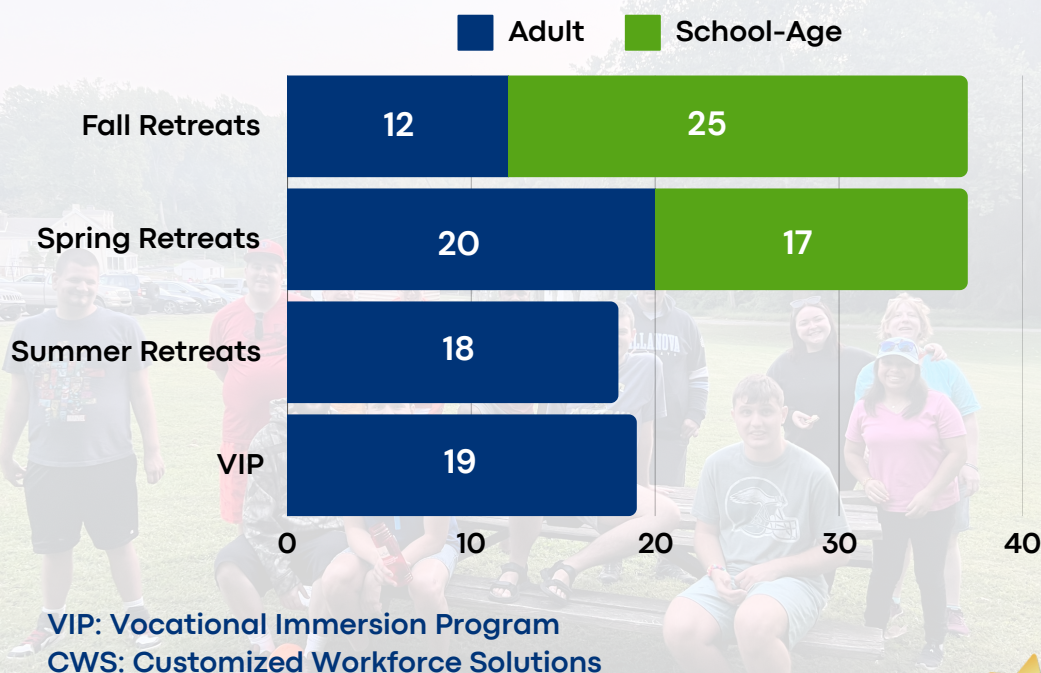
76.72%

23.28%

Diversity By County



Our Participants



67 CWS Participants

Our Staff

Congratulations to our 2023-24 staff award recipients!



Christine Magister (Right)

Excellence in Education Award

Excellence in Education Award Winner – Christine Magister

The Vanguard Excellence In Education Award is given to a Vanguard staff member who exhibits excellence in providing direct care to students.



David Blake (Right)

Unsung Hero Award

Unsung Hero Award Winner – David Blake

The Unsung Hero Award recognizes one staff member who embodies the spirit of VFES's commitment to serve. The recipient is a person who, through hard work, compassion and selflessness, goes above and beyond what is asked of him or her. The Unsung Hero uses initiative and creativity to positively influence the organization.

Our Community Partners

We would like to extend our profound gratitude to our 2023-24 community partners for their strong support. Please support these community-focused businesses.

Community Day Partners

GOLD SPONSORS



SILVER SPONSORS



RIISING STAR SPONSORS

- Goshen Medical Center
- H&R Telephones
- Independence Blue Cross
- NeurAbilities Healthcare
- Pediatric Psychology Center of Chester County
- PRJ Consulting
- Target Building Construction
- The Malvern School
- Wilkie Lexus
- WSFS Bank

Community-Based Vocational Training (CBVT) Partners

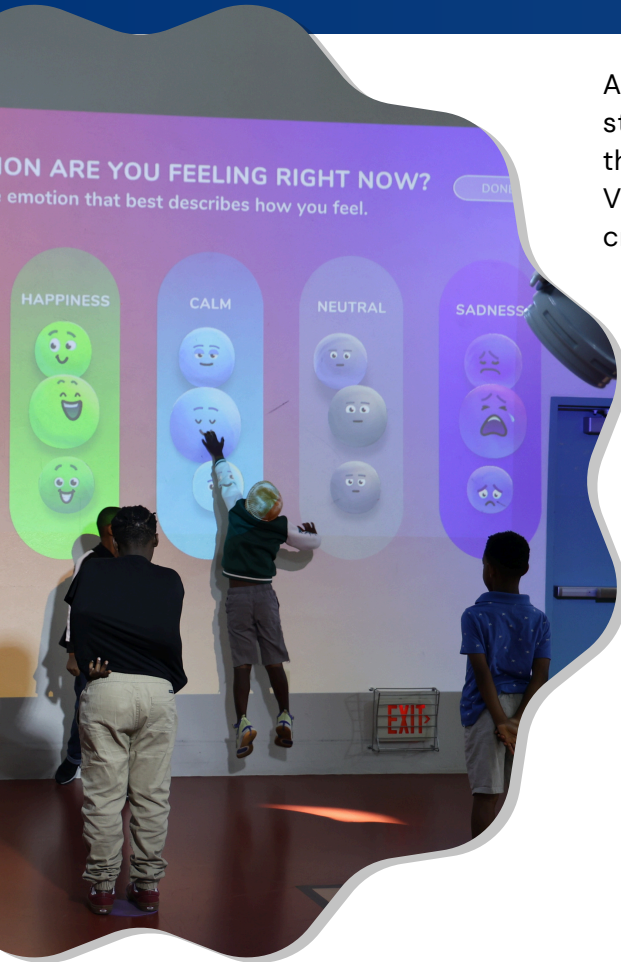
- Berks County Books
- Exton Boscov's
- Brandywine Valley SPCA
- Clean Logic
- Elmwood Park Zoo
- Fairfield Inn, Berwyn
- Forge Hill Farms
- Upper Mainline YMCA
- Phoenixville YMCA
- Exton Old Navy
- Sodexo Campus Dining Services
- Thorncroft Equestrian Center
- United Sports
- White Horse Village
- United States Liability Insurance Group (USLI)

Vocational Immersion Program (VIP) Partners

- Old Navy
- Upper Main Line YMCA
- Elmwood Zoo
- United Sports
- Brandywine Valley SPCA
- Canine Partners for Life

Our Impact

Lü Interactive Playground



According to the National Institutes of Health (NIH), neurodiverse students tend to be more introverted, and fearful of group activities than their neurotypical peers. Thanks to several generous donors, The Vanguard School is using state-of-the-art technology to address this critical issue.

In the summer of 2024, VFES installed the Lü Interactive Playground to enhance our Physical Education program. The Lü transforms learning spaces into a dynamic, immersive educational environment using large projections that double as touch screens. Add interactive lights, sound, and a treasure trove of athletic and educational platforms, and there's some serious excitement around active learning!

"The Lü creates a magical learning experience and an accessible educational opportunity for our kids," says Health and Physical Education Teacher, Chelsea Riggs. "We are seeing increases in student engagement, collaboration, team work, and physical fitness. The system even integrates academic skills and other types of learning into the games."

Thank you to Hamilton Family Charitable Trust, Ethel Sergeant Clark Smith Memorial Trust, CCRES, a host of Vanguard families, including special thanks to Tom Donia for helping to bring the Lü to Vanguard!

Eagles Autism Foundation

The Vanguard School's Community-Based Vocational Training (CBVT) and Community-Based Instruction (CBI) programs equip students with essential life skills and job readiness through hands-on experiences in real-world settings. These programs help our neurodiverse students cultivate skills for future employment and navigate new environments, ultimately preparing them for a successful transition into adulthood independence.

Since 2019, the Eagles Autism Foundation has supported VFES through event programming and grants for initiatives like our employment support program, Customized Workforce Solutions (CWS); Phase I of Vanguard's Pre-employment Training Center through the establishment of our student-led coffee shop, Pin's Café; the first Eagles Autism Foundation school-based All-Abilities Drumline Clinic; and our 12-passenger van purchase in 2024 for The Vanguard School's CBI and CBVT programs.

We are incredibly grateful for the positive impact The Eagles Autism Foundation has had on our ability to best meet the needs of our students and adults.



Our Impact

Community-Based Vocational Training (CBVT)

According to the PA Bureau of Autism Services, more than 1 in 4 adults with autism reports needing, but not receiving, vocational training, career counseling, or supported employment, and 1 in 5 reports needing, but not receiving, help with transition planning. This is where The Vanguard School excels--through programs like Community-Based Vocational Training (CBVT), which provides off-campus learning experiences for juniors, seniors and post-secondary students (ages 18–22) that stretch far beyond the classroom. In CBVT, students benefit from job exposure and opportunities to work at local businesses in order to develop vocational skills that will make them more employable in the future. Businesses benefit by investing in their communities and having young workers complete job-related tasks under the supervision of qualified Vanguard Job Coaches at no cost to the business.

In the 2023–2024 school year, 69 Vanguard students participated in CBVT between 1 and 3 times a week at 15 different community worksites, ranging from manufacturing, agriculture, retail, office work, culinary arts and animal care, among other industries—and the list is growing.

Community Partners like Forge Hill Farms provide mutually rewarding experiences for our students and local workplaces. Forge Hill is a family-run farm owned by Scott and Jennifer Simpson. There, students learn the basics of agriculture: planting and picking produce, maintaining grounds, pruning, weeding and mowing. They prepare vegetable beds and help harvest honey from bees. They jar canned goods and make vegetable jams. Their hard work is helping Forge Hill Farms realize its goals of providing healthy local food to the communities it serves, and the immense value of employing neurodiverse adults.

"I am happy to say that a third of our small crew is neurodiverse," says Jennifer. "We are proud to be a part of an enterprise that has greatly benefited from hiring and working with people with special needs – people who bring many talents and good qualities, including dependability and enthusiasm, to the job. We hope to expand the employment opportunities at our farm, and to be an example to other farms and related industries of what it means to benefit from employing the neurodiverse community."

Vanguard Vocational and Transition Program Coordinator, Donna Mazzella says, "Providing these vocational opportunities to our students is such a vital part of their transition planning. We have the true pleasure of witnessing our students go from first experiencing what "work" looks like with on-campus jobs to actually going out into the community up to three times per week to participate in the workforce. These community-based experiences really bridge the gap between the classroom and the real world."



Forge Hill Farms



Eastern University

Why I Give

"We give to VFES because our daughter and family have benefitted directly from the programming. We believe that a contribution to VFES impacts people, not only our own daughter, in meaningful and measurable ways. Our impression is that VFES is very well-managed and genuinely cares about the people they serve."

– Bryan and Betsy Calhoun, parents of Katie Calhoun

"We give because we support the Vanguard mission. We have benefitted and witnessed first hand through our child's progress, the exceptional Vanguard experience."

–Dr. Ben and Quiana Bullock, parents of Briana Bullock

"Giving to Valley Forge Educational Services ensures that we continue their mission by directly supporting programs that help our unique population access and connect to the world around us. I have watched my daughter thrive at The Vanguard School and am hopeful that many more parents and children get to experience this special connection with VFES."

–Karen Richards, parent of Summer Rae Schmitz



Katie Calhoun (Left), Briana Bullock (Middle),
Summer Rae Schmitz (Right)

Development By The Numbers

A heart-felt thank you to Patty Borth Wilson, our longest-standing recurring donor: 33 years. Patty's giving in memory of her late husband, John D. Wilson, keeps his legacy as Vanguard's Director of Education alive.



Annual Fund Campaign

\$62,686



Total raised through campus-based fundraisers Basketball Blast, Dolphin Dash and Designer Bag Bingo

\$17,309



Donations in support of VFES Sustainability Fund

\$37,376



Number of Children, Teen and Adults benefitting from donor-supported VFES Adult Employment and Recreation Services

176



Individual Donors

315



Number of Foundation Donors

12



Donors who renewed or increased their gift

164



Number of Corporate Donors

33



Record Community Day Sponsorship

\$27,150



Overall 2023-24 Giving:

\$306,913

Our Donors



Thank you for your generosity and commitment to our children, teens and adults. As a donor, you are an essential part of our mission to enhance the lives of those we serve through our educational, specialized recreation and employment-related programs.

With gratitude, we are pleased to recognize all gifts received July 1st, 2023 through June 30th, 2024.

Gifts of \$50,000 - \$99,999

Central Pennsylvania
Scholarship Fund
Penn Mutual Life Insurance
Company

Gifts of \$25,000 - \$49,999

Eagles Autism Foundation

Gifts of \$10,000 - \$24,999

Hamilton Family Charitable Trust
TE Connectivity
The Gordon Charter Foundation
WSFS Bank

Gifts of \$5,000 - \$9,999

Jack and Dorothea Birnbaum
CCRES, Inc.
Shruti and Niv Singhal
Z. Raymond and Tina Sokolowski
The Scholler Foundation
WSFS Cares Foundation

Gifts of \$2,500 - \$4,999

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Patricia Borth Wilson

Gifts of \$1,000 - \$2,499

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Gifts of \$250 - \$499

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Susan Weiss
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Alexa Snively
Lynn Takach

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Gifts of \$99 and Under (continued)

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Daniel and Diane Vandyke
Alex and Krista Gaul Wisniewski
Judy and Howard Wolfe
Shane and Dana Young
Matthew and Nicole Zeigler

MEMORIALS AND TRIBUTES

We are grateful for those who have chosen us in their commemoration of significant events in their lives. We honor and remember those loved ones.

In Memory of Kathi Donia
Tom Donia

In Memory of Frank Lewandowski, Jr.
Kimberly Lewandowski

In Memory of Timothy Paul Mohan
Margery Anderson
Anonymous
Annette Brandolini
Kathleen Mohan Blain
David Blake
Christine Coughenour
Mary and Rita Epple
Aaron Evans
Joan Hughes
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Jennifer Nagda
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Ronald Patterson
William and Lynne Peel
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Jean Shavor
Sharon Tannahill
Judy and Howard Wolfe

In Memory of Kathleen Mary Ryan
Tom Ahrendtsen

In Memory of Kathleen E. Schmalenberger
Mr. and Mrs. Joseph M. Fagan
Frederick and Barbara Howe
Richard Howe
Roberta Schmalenberger
West Shore Anesthesia Associates

In Memory of John Shaffer
Kathy Klingman

In Memory of Marla Silver
Scott Wheeler

Wilson Memorial Fund
In memory of John D. Wilson, former Director of Education at The Vanguard School, gifts from this fund are used to assist students financially who otherwise would not be able to participate in student activities.

Patricia Borth Wilson

In Honor of Jessica Buzza
Richard and Sheila Buzza

In Honor of Daniel Colvin and Jan Gnospelius
Bert Kramer

In Honor of Daniel DiClementi
Frank and Judy DiClementi

In Honor of Forge Hill Farms
Katie Kershner

In Honor of Dr. Grace A. Fornicola
Simeon Bardin and Susan Denman
Jack and Dorothea Birnbaum
Annette Brandolini
Crissy and Eric Brandt
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Jacque Carter
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Terri Fusaro

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Carol Gillece

In Honor of Billy and Dylan Greco
Gloria Rose

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Andrew and Nancy Grove

In Honor of Jackson Heller
Mark and Jennifer Heller
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Tom Yeager

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Karen Richards-Schmitz

In Honor of Ryan Sharrow
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Shruti and Niv Singhal

In Honor of The Vanguard Transition Center
Howard and Denise Stredler

In Honor of Will's Team
Joe and Peg Lavery

In Honor of Amy Zylberman
Seth Browner

In Honor of Susan Zylberman
Amy Zylberman

Participating United Ways

State Employees Campaign Appeal (SECA)
United Way of Chester County
United Way of Delaware
United Way Greater Philadelphia/Southern New Jersey
United Way of Massachusetts Bay & Merrimack Valley
United Way of Midland County
United Way of Southwestern Pennsylvania

Our Donors



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Exelon Corporation
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Johnson & Johnson
Manulife
Oracle
PECO
Pfizer
TE Connectivity
The Vanguard Group
Wells Fargo
Zelis Corporation

Staff Gifts

Thank you to our VFES Staff who gave to our Annual Appeal

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Anita Bilotta	Kathy Klingman
Dabney Blackwell	Liz Ladd
David Blake	Christine Magister
Annette Brandolini	Ursula Meszaros
Jackie Buchanan-Curry	Kate Mullen
Christine Coughenour	Meredith Nothstein
Denise Craig	Tom Quinn
Debra DiAntonio	Sheba Simms
Judy Fenerty	Tom Smith
Grace Fornicola	Johanna Spangenberg
Victoria Fringer	Sandi Spuhler
Jeanne-Marie Heighton	Karen Vadner
Teresa Hight	Carla Zajac
Ellen Jordan	Amy Zylberman

Donor List may be incomplete.



The VFES Legacy Circle recognizes individual donors who have given \$1,000 or more this fiscal year. VFES is very grateful for their generous support of our mission.

Simeon Bardin and Susan Denman
Jenn Barr
Jack and Dorothea Birnbaum
Connie Bompadre
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