

# Vermillion Pets To Take The Plunge

BY SARAH WETZEL  
For the Plain Talk

The time is approaching that the canine community of Vermillion has grown to love when the Prentiss Park pool opens their doors to our furry friends for the annual Doggie Plunge.

"We want everyone to bring their dog out," said Ryan Baedke of Vermillion Parks and Recreation. "Big, small, medium, we'll take them all. It is \$5 a dog to participate and all that money is donated to the Humane Society in Yankton."

The event will take place Friday the 21 from 5-7 p.m.

"I want to say this is the fifth year of it," Baedke said. "It has really grown. The first year we had a handful of dogs and the people enjoyed it. A lot of people called us after the fact asking if we do this all the time and no, it's just once a year because it does fill our pool with a lot of dog hair. The next year it just exploded and every year it seems to be more and more. It has become one of the events that the public really looks forward to in town."

According to Baedke it is an ideal, safe environment for dogs to have a great time.

"The pets can get out and swim in clean water and it's really safe," he said. "We have lifeguards on hand. The dogs get to play with other dogs. We've never had an incident with a dog fight or anything like that. It's just



a great, fun event."

Baedke himself said he plans on bringing his pooch pals.

"I have two dogs," he said. "They didn't come last year because one of them just had surgery but they're coming this year. I do have one dog that does not swim very well. She was a rescue dog. She's not afraid of water, she just never had the opportunity to learn how to swim properly and one of the lifeguards did jump in and save her. I had already told the guard that she couldn't swim. The guard saw her fall in after leaning over the edge. The guards are there not only to rescue the owners but the dogs as well."

Though the lifeguards are there, Baedke said owners should still be careful to supervise their pets to keep a safe and fun environment for everybody.

"If you know your dog doesn't

swim well stick to the wading pool area unless you're planning on being in the water with your dog," he said. "The water does get deep for a lot of dogs. You have to be a pretty big dog to put your paws on the side of the pool and stand."

"Another tip I have is make sure your dog goes to the bathroom prior to coming to the pool so we don't have any accidents on the deck to clean up," Baedke continued. "Owners are responsible to clean up after their dog. We provide bags and cleaning material if there's an accident. If your dog is aggressive maybe this isn't the best place for them because there are kids that come. It's a family outing to come swim with the dog in the pool."

The Doggie Plunge comes at the end of a successful summer of splashing and swimming for all of Vermillion and the Parks and Rec. is ready to move on to the next phase.

"Starting the 22 the pool will be drained and we'll clean it for the year and then it will reopen next year," Baedke said. "We're anticipating construction beginning early in 2016 over there but we will still have our current pool for one more summer so we will never not have a pool."

For more information on the Doggie Plunge or other Vermillion Parks and Rec. events visit [www.vermillionpark-sandrec.com](http://www.vermillionpark-sandrec.com).

## Golf Ball Drop For CASA Planned

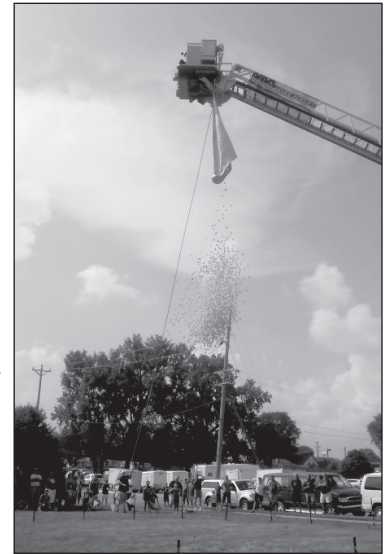
The Southeast CASA (Court-Appointed Special Advocates) Program is hosting The Golf Ball Drop for CASA fundraiser near Riverside Park on Saturday, August 22 at 4:00 p.m., as a part of Riverboat Days 2015.

Southeast CASA is a 501 c (3) non-profit organization, providing advocacy services for abused and neglected children from Yankton, Clay, and Bon Homme Counties who are involved in the foster care and family court systems. CASA's highly-trained volunteers advocate for the children in these difficult situations, providing each child with a voice in Court. Our mission is to ensure that the best interests of a child are promoted as the Court determines where the child will have a safe, permanent home.

The Golf Ball Drop for CASA has 2,000 individually numbered golf balls which will be dropped from an extended fire truck ladder onto the grassy area east of the water treatment plant. Raffle tickets corresponding to the golf balls will be sold for \$5 each or 5/\$20. There are 17 chances to win \$100, and one chance to win \$500! Ticket holders do not need to be present to win.

A children's activity takes place following the measurements. Kids will pick up as many golf balls as they can, each earning a prize for their help. CASA will weigh each bag, and a larger prize will go to the child in each category who gathers the most balls.

As a local non-profit organization, Southeast CASA relies on local support to help every child who needs a CASA advocate. You can provide CASA services for abused and neglected children through your participation in this fun activity! To purchase your raffle tickets, please contact the Southeast CASA Program at 605-760-4825 or 605-929-5126.



## School

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all things go better in life," Hamm said. "I'm blessed to be here because I love to be able to help the kids with that and help them grow in both their faith relationship and their academics and their values, all aspects of their life."

### Austin Elementary:

Kim Johnson, Principal at Austin Elementary is excited for the start of a new semester.

"We have all the youngest students in the district so that's always the most exciting part, welcoming them to Austin," she said. "For many of our students, this will be their first year in the public school system. That's a really big deal! We are committed to making it a positive and exciting transition for students and parents."

For parents sending their first child off to school, Johnson said it's important for parents to keep their cool.

"Parents can help this transition by sharing their excitement about the start of the school year and confidence in their child's ability to enjoy this new adventure," she said. "If parents show apprehension or concern about letting them go, the children will pick up on these feelings which can create anxiety."

Other ways for parents to contribute to a great school year include physical preparation.

"Rest is a critical factor in the transition phase," Johnson said. "Helping children gradually adjust to an earlier bedtime is important preparation for the transition. Our school days are full and active—physically, cognitively, and socially—so, being well rested is a necessity."

It looks to be a good year according to Johnson.

"I don't anticipate any specific challenges," she said. "Reading and writing continue to be major focus areas as we build students' foundational skills for life-long learning. In math, we will strive to foster problem solving and critical thinking skills."

Johnson herself enjoys the part she gets to play in Vermillion children's education.

"I enjoy the personal interaction with students and their families, getting to know them and being a positive part of this journey," she said. "And we have excellent teachers and staff; it's really a privilege to work with them as well. New staff at Austin include: a guidance counselor, a speech therapist, a special education teacher, and educational assistants. I'm happy to welcome them to the Austin team."

### Jolley Elementary

Lynn Galvin principal at Jolley Elementary says she is looking forward to working with the students, staff and families.

"I'm looking forward to learning with the Jolley students, staff and families and celebrating the strengths they bring to the school,"

she said. "I plan to model and support a positive climate in which staff will continue to commit their time and energy as professionals to build on the outstanding work of the Vermillion School District."

She said the goals at Jolley include supporting, promoting and enhancing student learning.

At Jolley, our goals are to support and model an engaged positive learning climate," she said. "We also promote the strengths of the staff, the students and the parents; enhance a focus on student learning, based on instructional strategies and customized learning that reflects the common core standards all while using school performance data to work with staff to continue to improve instruction so teachers can continue to teach their best and students can maximize their success."

This summer the staff at Jolley put in many hours in the library to help meet those goals, she said.

"In the library you will find a new circulation desk, student friendly furniture, a writing bench area & a Lego construction center," said Galvin. "The Jolley office area has been updated with media tools to highlight photos of the students and staff learning."

She also said at the end of the day learning is the most important thing that will go on at the school.

"The Jolley staff continues to monitor the learning of each student and expects all students to start middle school as an accomplished writer, reader and learner," she said. "As a result of our efforts a new Literacy Intervention System will be used this year. The Leveled Literacy Intervention System is a small-group, supplementary literacy intervention designed to help teachers provide powerful, daily, small-group instruction for the lowest achieving students at their grade level. Through

systematically designed lessons and original, engaging leveled books, LLI supports learning in both reading and writing, helps students expand their knowledge of language and words and how they work. The goal of LLI is to bring students to grade level achievement in reading."

Another new program, thanks to the support of the Vermillion Public School Foundation is the Literacy Learning for Life Program.

"This program will bring to Vermillion a recognized national staff developer, Leslie Blauman who has more than 25 years of classroom experience, has developed a program that has been used nationwide with positive results," said Galvin. "She will provide instruction on research based writing and reading strategies and will build upon training already provided by the Vermillion School District. There will be literacy classroom demonstrations, small team learning groups, peer review, and individually designed writing and reading strategies to assist all learners."

With the emphasis on strong reading skills, Galvin said the Home Reading team will gather soon to set a new reading challenge for students at Jolley.

### Vermillion Middle School:

According to Vermillion Middle School Principal Pat Anderson, the start of a new school year is the chance to take things to a higher level.

"One of our goals this year is to improve writing for kids and so that's one thing we're going to be working on for kids of all grade levels," he said. "We're going to do some different strategies but what we're going to try to do is some age appropriate things with the kids, combining different strategies like the six plus one strategies of how to write. You start with a draft, you go to your second draft, teaching

kids that writing is a process is the most important thing."

It's an initiative the whole school will be focused on.

"We're having a writing specialist come into the district and she's going to help our teachers and teach us some new strategies to help kids become better writers," Anderson said. "We're going to do writing across the curriculum so teachers in every contact area, whether they're teaching history or science are going to be teaching kids how to write better."

The teachers and staff at the Middle School will be focused on improving themselves, as well as new information comes in on the state assessment.

"We're always constantly working on our Smarter Balanced Assessments," Anderson said. "We're getting our first results back from the state. There's this new state assessment that all the kids in South Dakota take and we're going to get that information later in September and we're going to break down for every student the reading and the math and writing areas that they can improve upon as far as the state standards are concerned or the common core standards now. So that information will be coming out. It's all brand new to us. We're going to have to do a lot of work the first few months of school to understand what the reports are telling us. It

should help us zero in on areas our kids are doing really well on and areas they can improve upon."

The time the doors open to students is very invigorating to Anderson.

"Just the start of the school year is a very exciting time, getting to know a new batch of kids coming through the middle school, seeing all the kids who have been here the last two years and just trying to do some new things," he said.

Anderson said he hopes that parents are on board with their children's education.

"The number one thing is making sure kids are getting enough sleep, eating right, doing things like that," he said. "Also helping them be more responsible, making sure they do their homework, making a place for them to do their homework and setting up a routine. Communicate with your child's teachers, making sure you're coming to parent teacher conferences or emailing their teachers. If you open up those lines of communication you can keep track of where your kids are. It's just basically making sure that kids are ready to learn and open the line of communication."

### Vermillion High School

Principal Curt Cameron said he expects that the eyes of the school will all be focused on the renovations that have been completed this summer.

"The major thing this

year is going to be the renovation – to see the kid's eyes," he said. "The restroom renovations and the heating and air conditioning being more consistent, we are going to have a very positive learning environment just because of the new renovation."

He added that the school will continue to offer great programming for all students.

Students at Vermillion High School are able to select from over 60 varied course offerings. In addition to core subjects, honors or advanced placement courses are available in English, Math, Science and Social Science. Students are prepared for work in the 21st century through a variety of computer-based courses such as computer hardware, web design, graphics, and computer applications.

"Like always, our kids are great kids to work with," he said. "We are going to have a lot of high achievers. Our kids do very well academically. For our seniors, the year will go very quick. They will be busy just grasping the scholarship opportunities that are out there."

Cameron said he expects the first day will be a lot of fun.

"I feel good just being a part of this community and seeing these kids coming in," he said. "We are going to have a great year."

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