



## Local School ... Local Ties



(Above): students work on murals during *Art Two* class.

(Left): VL murals are seen in the windows of a vacant building on the corner of Washington and Genesee, downtown Saginaw.

On the corner of Genesee and Washington, in the heart of downtown Saginaw, you'll see a vacant building. You'll also see some artwork.

In the fall of 2019, sophomores, juniors, and seniors within Valley's *Art Two* class collaborated on a community minded art project in small groups. They used bright, bold colors with pleasing shapes to create one of a kind movable murals that could withstand the weather and be displayed outside year round.

*Art Two* teacher **Karla Stahlecker** partnered with the Saginaw County Land Bank Authority

for this project.

"The goal was for students to see that they can use their God-given talents and abilities now," **Stahlecker** stated, "while helping to build up and take care of our community. In areas that are neglected or overlooked, we tried to create work that would brighten and protect homes and businesses in our communities that otherwise might have fallen victim to vandalism."

VL students created a total of nine murals - check them out in person the next time you drive through the area!



## Local School ... Global Ties

It happens every three years. And it happened, right on schedule, last July. Thirteen Valley students, eight parent chaperones, and two Valley alumni embarked on a weeklong mission trip to Parole de Vie (Word of Life) France. Word of Life is a ministry outreach focused on sharing the Gospel with the French youth.

This past summer Valley's mission group assisted with "English Week," a week that sees more non-Christian attendees, a week where the daily message is shared in English (and translated to French) and most of the songs are sung in English, too. "English Week" focuses on sharing the English language through games, Bible study, and competitions while also teaching the basics of the Gospel, creating a two-fold learning experience for French teens.

While "English Week" is run by the missionaries serving at Word of Life, Valley's mission team served the missionaries by holding a VBS for their

children. The team cleaned bathrooms, prepared the cafeteria for meals, prepped for outdoor activities, and helped with anything else that was needed.

In 2019, though, things changed a bit. Due to French government regulations, the students from VL were not allowed to be volunteer workers because they were under the age of 18.

So, what did they do instead? They attended "English Week" as campers. They immersed themselves in camp, interacting with, and witnessed to, the French teens on a more personal level. They formed meaningful, lasting friendships.

"The young people in France have a great struggle. Studies show that less than 2% of the country is Christian, so these students may be the only Christian in their family, in their school," VL French teacher and chaperone **Cris Urbytes** shared. "It's very difficult for them to live out their faith day by day, so it's an awesome experience for our VL students



Valley students, chaperones, and alumni gather in front of Parole de Vie for a photo.

to be a role model, to be a boost for their faith. And social media has helped that. The students get to communicate and encourage the friends they made while in France once they return to the USA."

VL senior **Lydia Schultz** is returning to Parole de Vie this summer due to the relationships she formed last year. Planning to enter full-time mission work, Schultz said, "The way the counselors interacted with everyone was so influential. Their love for Jesus came through in all they do! I can't pick a favorite highlight, the whole experience and the whole trip was amazing."

## Character by Karla Stahlecker, VL Art Teacher

I have often heard the definition of character as “what you do when no one is looking.”

I disagree. It is often easier to do the right thing when unobserved. It is much more difficult to do the right thing when the crowd tells you “it doesn’t even matter.” A person with a strong character is reliable, honest, and honorable. A person with strong character admits when they make mistakes and makes a genuine effort to rectify them. They have no need to say “I promise,” because their “I will” means more. Strong character means holding yourself to a high standard in all your dealings.

Character is built choice by choice, day by day. It’s built in the actions we take within our vocations. It is a lifelong pursuit. It is how you use your talents and abilities within the vignettes of your life, as you serve God and share His story of salvation.

For a long time, I labored under the misinterpretation that as a teacher, I needed to act just like my very traditional and aloof teachers. I thought that my awkwardness and nerdiness would be barriers to me being effective in my chosen profession. I thought that I needed to change myself in order to be useable.

But when we examine the lives of biblical figures we see a different narrative. **Saul** was single-minded in his pursuit of Christians, but **Paul** was fanatical in the sharing of the

gospel. **Peter**, who quickly denied Jesus, was the same man who was so intent on reconnecting with his Savior that he jumped out of the boat to swim to shore. **Joseph** was untrusting but kindhearted, offering mercy to the woman who had supposedly betrayed him- to become the earthly father of Jesus.

Time and time again, God uses people who appear broken, who have unusual passions and whose character is unreliable. He infuses them with His grace and fortifies their character. He leaves them with stories that have a broader impact than they could have possibly imagined.

**Romans 5:3-5** says, “We rejoice in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, and hope does not put us to shame, because God’s love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us.”

Along the way, we will stumble, fall to peer pressure, make poor choices, and act in a manner unworthy of the gospel. But God’s grace is endless, and He continually renews our strength and builds us up. He helps us be firm when we face a world that insists that we be flexible. He grants us footing to stand strong when good leaders are needed. He blesses us as we do His work while on this earth. Praise God that He uses the broken - that he uses US!



**CLUE:**  
Secrets in the Grand Ballroom

Valley Lutheran HIGH SCHOOL

Benefit **Dinner & Auction**  
Saturday **Feb. 29, 2020**

Silent Auction 5:00  
Dinner 7:00  
Live Auction 8:00

Apple Mountain Grand Ballroom  
Tickets on sale now \$65 / person  
Visit vlhsauction.com for info

### Valley Lutheran Drama Department Presents

Streuth / A Collier’s Tuesday Tea  
by Michael Green  
Directed by: Silas Kaul, senior

The Bible in 30 Minutes or Less!  
by Anton Bucher  
Directed by: Abbey Hambaum, senior

When: Feb. 13 & 14 @ 7 pm, Feb. 15 @ 2 pm  
Where: Peace Lutheran Church (3427 Adams Rd. Saginaw)  
Admission: \$7 for adults, \$5 for students (includes dessert)



SAVE THE DATE

FOR A CELEBRATION OF DR. JOHN BRANDT’S

**40 YEARS OF MINISTRY**

SATURDAY, MAY 16, 2020  
HORIZON’S CONFERENCE CENTER

TICKETS ON SALE MARCH 1, 2020



Valley Lutheran HIGH SCHOOL