

Positive Outcomes Abound from School Involvement

Mom's Volunteer Work Valued by All; Earns Her Rockwood's Rose Award

by Peggy Magee

If were possible to clone parent Carolyn Tisdale, school staff and students everywhere would jump at the chance.

At Rockwood's Uthoff Valley Elementary School, where Tisdale has two daughters, the faculty admire her for what teacher Julie Backer describes as, "going way beyond the average expectation of parent involvement." This past year, Tisdale volunteered regularly in her daughter Trinity's first grade class and, according to Backer, the kiddos always looked forward to her visits because of her "full out" participation, including working with them in the classroom, eating lunch in the cafeteria and playing with them at recess. "All my students think Mrs. Tisdale is really cool," confirms Backer.

Recognizing that Tisdale is one special mom, the Rockwood district awarded her its coveted Rose award, which this year went to 15 individuals who show excellence of character, performance, leadership and service to the Rockwood school district. In addition to Tisdale, Rose award recipients included teachers, administrators, a classroom assistant and a bus driver who were chosen from among the 250 persons nominated.

By any standards, Tisdale goes above and beyond at Uthoff Valley Elementary School in Fenton. Not only did she do her classroom volunteering two to three Wednesdays a month (staying on to join the children at lunch and on the playground), she was present at nearly every school activity involving her daughters, including the first day of school event, the fall festival, music performances and field trips, as well as PTO meetings. In past years, Tisdale has done a lot with 10-year-old Terrena's classes, such as volunteering for class parties and other special events.

Her active involvement is even more impressive given her circumstances. The family lives in St. Louis city and has been without a car since it was stolen nearly two years ago from outside their apartment. Tisdale rides the Metro bus to do her classroom volunteering and to get to many other functions at the school. Uthoff Valley is more than 15 miles from her home near Carondelet Park where she resides with her husband Terrence, their two daughters and 14-year-old son, Isaiah, who is autistic. The bus drops her at the McDonald's about a half mile from the school and she walks the rest of the way, no matter rain, shine, wind or snow, according to Julie Backer.

Tisdale says she is engaged in her children's education because she cherishes being part of their young lives and because she knows how much it means to them. "My girls look forward to me coming to school. It makes their day." Her loving and caring manner extends to all the school children with whom she comes in contact, as reflected in a comment she repeats often, "I love all my Backer babies," referring to the children in Julie Backer's class.

Tisdale's hands-on routine sends a strong message to her girls, plus makes a wonderful impression on the other children, according to principal Connie Browning. "Mrs. Tisdale's daughters see that education matters to her and that is a motivating factor when children see the priority their parents place on

education." Pointing to the connections and relationships Tisdale builds with the other students, Browning notes, "It has such a positive impact on them."

Being so tied into the school community has had some unintended outcomes for which Tisdale is especially appreciative. Having talked to other moms about the Girl Scout troop at Uthoff Valley, she enrolled Trinity in it and with the help of Trinity's leader, she found a troop that is a good fit for Terrena not far from their home. On meeting days for Trinity, a family hosts her after school until the scout meetings start and other scout moms take turns driving her home.

When Trinity was invited to a classmate's birthday party in High Ridge, an arrangement was worked out whereby Tisdale and Trinity met the host family at a half way point – South County Mall (a straight-shot bus ride for Tisdale) – and mom and Terrena browsed the mall until Trinity was returned there. "I'm so pleased that my girls can spend time with their

friends outside of the school day," she notes.

Tisdale has a saying that guides the family in all they do: "We may not have a lot, but we make the most of what we do have." One opportunity they have, she points out, is the ability to attend the Rockwood district. "We are so fortunate," she says. And she takes full advantage of it by becoming immersed in everything that's happening at school.

By attending the informational sessions for parents on the first day of school (she caught a 6:30 a.m. bus), Tisdale found out about academic resources and curriculum information that she taps into often. Many times before arriving at Mrs. Backer's class, she had already read the book that she was asked to work on that day with the students. She utilizes the school's website to access books the girls can read for Accelerated Reader credits. Mrs. Backer's class website, which features fun ideas and interactive activities, captures the attention of mother and daughter on a regular basis. "Trinity likes to update her class on our family's activities," mom says with a smile.

As a result of Tisdale's presence at the school, she has developed relationships with faculty and administrators. "Because of the comfort level we have with one another, I am not afraid to ask questions or request assistance," she explains, adding that everyone responds in a most helpful manner. The same holds true for other parents, she says. She is so well thought of that she has been asked to serve as an officer on the PTO next year, a responsibility for which she feels honored and was pleased to accept.

Principal Browning believes the example Tisdale sets for other non-resident parents is a good thing too. "They see that it is possible to be part of their children's education and to be seen as a valuable volunteer." School counselor Lisa Sandbothe totally agrees: "Other parents can see it is doable."

Not only doable, but so much to be gained by it, is Tisdale's way of thinking. She encourages other parents to "open that door" to becoming active in their children's school lives. "Find out what's there for you. You'll be happy you did, I promise you."



Parent volunteer Carolyn Tisdale has fun on the playground with first graders at Uthoff Valley Elementary School. The school benefits from Tisdale's active involvement; she and her family benefit from the connections and resources she gains. "We cannot expect our children to be open to new experiences and opportunities if we are not," notes Tisdale, who received Rockwood's coveted Rose award. Photo by Marilyn Zimmerman

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- Be follower #500 and win an **I-Pod Shuffle.**
- Be follower #1,000 and win an **I-Pod Shuffle and an I-Tunes gift card.**

VICC/Transpar employees and their families are not eligible for prizes (but please do follow along to see what's new with VICC.) Anyone found to use multiple accounts to enter will be ineligible.

Carolyn's Advice for Parents

Build a relationship with the teacher and other school staff. Ways to do this:

- school visits
- conferences
- email and phone

There is much to be gained by getting to know the people who your child is in contact with all day.

Ask about how you can get involved. Volunteer opportunities usually include helping in the classroom or in the library, field trips, class parties, so find out what is possible for you and your schedule.

Most importantly, a little time can mean so much – to your child, to the teacher and to you! Take a few minutes to visit your child's class. Meet their classmates and see who their friends are.

"Involve yourself and have fun. Children, they teach us so much."

Outstanding 2012 GRADUATES

This issue of the Parent Link is dedicated to hardworking students who have graduated. There are scores of others also graduating and teachers as well. You are

AFFTON

Affton High School

Accepted to attend Missouri Valley on a football scholarship, **Jean Pierre** played football for Affton for three years, serving as varsity captain for the 2011 season. He earned honorable mention all conference honors and also distinguished himself placing second and third in area track meets in the 4 x 100. Jean also earned academic honors, ranking above the 50th percentile in his class and earning a 21 on his ACT test and qualified for the Missouri A+ program. He volunteered at the Patch Day Care Center and talked about the dangers of drugs to elementary school students during Red Ribbon Week.

BAYLESS

Bayless High School

Ra'Shawn Wright plans to attend St. Louis Community College at Meramec to study court reporting and hopes to continue her legal education, with a goal of becoming a lawyer. She actively participated in school and community organizations. A cast member of the Bayless Theatre Company, Ra'Shawn continued to volunteer after completing her tutoring hours for A+ and also volunteers at her church and a food bank. She received the President's Education Award for Outstanding Academic Achievement in Broadcast Captioning at South Technical High School and was recognized as a Woman of Destiny from Kids Across America and received the Proverbs 31 Woman's Award.

BRENTWOOD

Brentwood High School

Whitney Howard is a mature, driven, responsible and well respected young woman. In her senior year she took college classes while still enrolled full-time at Brentwood, and also participated in Brentwood's inaugural year of the A+ program. She took early graduation and attended community college full-time while also working 25 hours a week. This fall she plans to transfer to the University of Missouri-St. Louis to major in psychology. At Brentwood she participated in theater, was a cheerleader all four years and is one of two students in her class to attend Missouri Girls State.

CLAYTON

Clayton High School

Serving as class president for the past three years, **Drake Pinkston** is one of the most confident and accomplished students in this year's graduating class. A top academic student and an outstanding leader, he served on the Principal's Advisory Council, the Mayor's Youth Advisory Council and was a member of the Black Student Union. He has participated in many extracurricular activities and completed many hours of community service. Drake plans to attend the University of Southern California this fall, with a focus on private equity venture capitalism.



Hyonna Williams
Hancock Place High School

HANCOCK PLACE

Hancock Place High School

Recognized for her outstanding academic accomplishments and participation in extracurricular activities, **Hyonna Williams** plans to utilize her A+ scholarship by attending St. Louis Community College at Forest Park, where she plans to study culinary arts. She intends to later transfer to a four-year university to study hospitality management. Her passion for the culinary arts was fueled by course work and participation in Hancock's Family, Career and Community Leaders of America organization. She served as a varsity cheerleader for the past three years and was vice-president of DECA.

KIRKWOOD

Kirkwood High School

The recipient of a basketball scholarship to Missouri University of Science and Technology, **Dajae Williams** will major in engineering. She is one of 12 area high school seniors to receive the McDonald's Academic Excellence Award which includes scholarship funds. Among her other honors is the Gold K, for maintaining a cumulative 3.5 grade point average; the African American Academic Award for maintaining a high grade average; and she was recognized for having the highest grade point average for the senior class. A member of the varsity girls basketball team which won the Class 5 District 5 title in March, Dajae was also named to the second team all conference and first team all district in basketball.

LINDBERGH

Lindbergh High School

Tyler Ishmon, a track team captain and cheerleading star, aspires to study accounting at Louisiana State University in Baton Rouge. Her strong academics and character have made her a regular Renaissance award recipient since her freshman year. She was also a member of DECA and worked with her fellow cheerleaders to raise funds for a student with cancer and annually supports the Susan G. Komen Race for the Cure.



Jean Pierre
Affton High School

After a trip to state last year Tyler hopes to run track as a collegiate athlete as well.

MEHLVILLE

Mehlville High School

With plans to attend the University of Central Missouri to major in athletic training, **Ijon Howard** has been involved in football, track and field, DECA and Paws N Peace at Mehlville. His accomplishments include inclusion on the honor roll and being named most improved football player for two years in a row.

Oakville High School

Janeshae Henderson will attend Missouri State University in Springfield to major in photography. After college she hopes to be able to travel with a photography career and eventually open her own gallery. A member of the leadership class that teaches leadership skills and plans community and school projects, Janeshae has earned high honors each year because her grade point was always 3.5 or higher. She also earned senior privileges because of her academic ability, good attendance and citizenship. She served as a student council representative and was named student of the month by the art department.

PARKWAY

Parkway Central High School

Devon Westley plans to attend Southeast Missouri State University this fall, after gaining acceptance to five colleges and universities. A football stand-out, he was offered the opportunity to play at several schools. At Central, Devon was a volunteer for the Spirit of Excellence



Ra'Shawn Wright
Bayless High School



Whitney Howard
Brentwood High School



Dajae Williams
Kirkwood High School



Tyler Ishmon
Lindbergh High School



Ijon Howard
Mehlville High School



Janeshae Henderson
Oakville High School



Gabrielle Evans
Parkway South High School



Daysha Baskin
Parkway West High School



Jerica Macon
Pattonville High School



Antonia Carter
Eureka High School

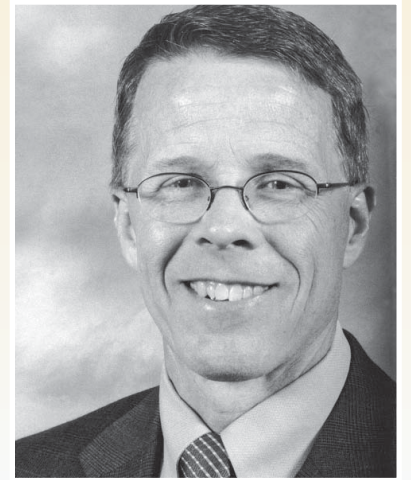


Jaelynn Hopgood
Lafayette High School



Anthony Dudley
Marquette High School

Message from the CEO



Congratulations to all of the recent high school graduates with a special word of commendation to the outstanding graduates highlighted in this issue of Parent Link. These students represent themselves as well as their many classmates.

The mom featured in this newsletter is an outstanding example of the significant difference that parental involvement can make in a child's success. The research is clear that when parents are involved students are much more likely to be successful and have:

- Higher grades, test scores, and graduation rates;
- Better school attendance;
- Increased motivation and better self-esteem;
- Lower rates of suspension;
- Decreased use of drugs and alcohol; and
- Fewer instances of violent behavior.

The research also shows that family participation in education is twice as predictive of students' academic success as family socioeconomic status. In addition, the more intensely parents are involved, the more beneficial the achievement effects. For example, parents participating in schooling in a multiple number of ways such as volunteering, fund raising, serving on the PTO, etc., led to more beneficial results for student achievement.

I am sure this research would come as no surprise to Carolyn Tisdale whose two daughters attend Uthoff Valley Elementary School. In fact, I am convinced that her story is much more compelling than anything I could mention in my column to convince you of the difference your participation and involvement will make. After all, she faces challenges similar to many parents and yet she has made the commitment and figured out a way to actively support her children's education.

As a parent, I recognize that "more is caught than is taught." By that I mean our children believe what we do more than what we say and there is no better way to communicate the importance of education than by our personal involvement. So this summer I encourage you to talk with your children about how you can participate in their education and take the time now to get those school visits and events scheduled on your calendar.

Here's wishing you a great, involved 2012.

David S. Glaser
CEO
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314.721.8422, ext. 3014

is dedicated to those transfer students who are members of the Class of 2012 – have left behind an enviable record of accomplishments. For each student who is mentioned, also deserving of recognition. Our congratulations go not only to the students, but their parents are at the heart of this program and an important part of the success it has achieved.

GRADUATES

awards program, and served as a student leader for a Diversity in Action panel and was a student speaker on the male perspective for a "Women Only" workshop.

Parkway North High School

Headed to Southeast Missouri State University this fall, **Adrian Flenoid** was active at his high school, assisting in the planning, organization and actual participation in the No Place for Hate Assembly. He also worked with the Freshman Project Group and volunteered for special projects directed by his principal. Adrian was a volunteer for the Teen Advocate for Sexual Health youth group and the St. Augustine Center.

Parkway South High School

With plans to join the United State Navy and later attend Southeast Florida University, **Gabrielle Evans** is considered one of Parkway South's brightest stars. She is captain of South's track and field team, and a member of the Superintendent's Social Justice Advisory Committee. Over the last four years, she challenged herself academically by taking AP and honors courses. Among her honors are the coveted South Star Award, the Student of the Month (Math) Award and the Spirit of Excellence Award.

Parkway West High School

The recipient of an athletic scholarship to Missouri Valley College in Marshall, Mo., **Daysha Baskin** plans to major in nursing with a minor in Spanish. A member of both the honor roll and the National Honor Society, she was selected as homecoming queen in 2011, was senior captain of the cross country team and participated in track and field and bowling. She was chair of the Women of West, was a member of the Superintendent's Social

Justice Leadership Advisory Council and received the Spirit of Excellence award, among numerous achievements.



Drake Pinkston
Clayton High School

PATTONVILLE

Pattonville High School

With plans to attend Southeast Missouri State University to pursue a degree in athletic training, **Jerica Macon** has been involved in Pattonville cheer, Peer Assistance and Leadership (PALS) and Renaissance for the last four years. After college, she would love to re-join the Pattonville family in a professional capacity.



Devon Westley
Parkway Central High School

ROCKWOOD

Eureka High School

Antonia Carter has been accepted to Missouri Baptist University where she plans to major in education and criminal justice as well as play for the women's lacrosse team. Her goal is to become a social worker focusing on youth and families. In addition to her academic career, Antonia has participated in Eureka's Renaissance Committee,

TREND and was the captain of dance for Wildn'Out Cats. She was a Glory of Missouri recipient as an awardee for the virtue of equality.

Lafayette High School

Jaelynn Hoppood will attend Saint Louis University and plans to study either pharmacy or psychology. During high school she focused her studies on high-level math and science courses and participated in BESt pharmacy summer program in both 2010 and 2011. Jaelynn proved her academic excellence through the Renaissance Silver Award and was a two-time recipient of the Lafayette Student Choice Awards.

Marquette High School

Anthony Dudley has been a student leader at Marquette, maintaining a high grade-point average while competing as a student-athlete. His academic focus has been on business management courses and advanced strength training. He plans to attend Southern Illinois University at Carbondale where he will pursue a degree in international business and play football for the Salukis.

Rockwood Summit High School

Recognized as the outstanding senior at Rockwood Summit High School, **Jerome Golden Jr.** is considering opportunities from various local colleges to study and compete in track and field. He plans to prepare for a career as a collegiate track and field coach. A member of Summit's track and field team that was in contention for a state title, Jerome was a Focus St. Louis Ambassador, a member of the Strive and Survive Club and served as a peer mentor for productive conflict resolution.

ST. LOUIS

Metro Academic and Classical High School

Only the 51st person in the St. Louis region to earn a perfect 36 composite score on the ACT college exam since 2000, **Thomas Fliss** is the first St. Louis Public School District student to post a perfect score in that time span. He plans to major in computer science in college and is currently considering Stanford, Cal Tech, Massachusetts Institute of Technology or Carnegie Mellon University. Prior to his senior year, he attended an eight-week summer college program at Stanford, earning nine college credits, studying java programming, piano and oceanography. Among his many honors, Thomas was named a National Merit finalist. At Metro, he was involved in concert band, the math club and the NERD club. He was a member of the school's debate club for three years.

VALLEY PARK

Valley Park High School

Sh'sheria Webster's post-graduation goal is to pursue a career in the United State Air Force. Her positive attitude and dedication to hard work have been inspirational to her fellow students. A cheerleader for many years, Sh'sheria served as captain this past year. She was a leader in Show Choir, where she served as choreography captain and regularly sang the national anthem at basketball games, and was a stand-out in school talent shows.

WEBSTER GROVES

Webster Groves High School

Courtney Jones, who enrolled in the Webster Groves School District as a kindergartner, is this year's outstanding senior. At the high school, she participated in Webster Challenge, the school's program to help eliminate the achievement gap, and the orchestra where she plays viola. A strings student for ten years, Courtney plans to seek employment as a pharmacy technician.



Jerome Golden Jr.
Rockwood Summit High School



Thomas Fliss
Metro Academic & Classical High School



Sh'sheria Webster
Valley Park High School



Courtney Jones
Webster Groves High School

VICC Staff Ready to Assist Transferring Families

The Voluntary Interdistrict Choice Corporation (VICC) staff includes five full-time counselors/social workers who can assist families with issues related to their school transfers.

Counselors are happy to respond to concerns and/or questions from parents or students regarding any issue that would interfere with the success of a child in the school setting, such as attendance, disciplinary issues, curriculum, achievement or other concerns. They can also provide counseling assistance for students and help parents understand their educational rights.

Counselors generally are assigned according to the first letter of the student's last name. They can be reached by calling 314.721.8422, and dialing the extension number below, or via email.



A-D Vickie Williams
ext. 3011
vwilliams@choicecorp.org



E-H Laverne Mitchom
ext. 3020
lmitchom@choicecorp.org



I-M Jennifer Christy
ext. 3021
jchristy@choicecorp.org



N-R Mildred Scott
ext. 3027
msscott@choicecorp.org



S-Z Mary Schafer Meehan
ext. 3016
mmeehan@choicecorp.org

Contact Persons for Voluntary Student Transfer Program Families

Each of the districts accepting voluntary transfer students has a designated contact person. Contact persons coordinate the district's administrative responsibilities for the transfer program, and serve as the liaison between the Voluntary Interdistrict Choice Corporation (VICC) and the district.

Contact persons' responsibilities may include enrolling transfer students, conducting orientations for new students and parents, processing applications and submitting transportation requests.

Contact persons are often the first individual from the district that a new transfer family meets, and they are a valuable resource for transfer families. They can answer specific questions about district policy and procedures and can refer parents to the proper school administrator if necessary.

Affton

Dr. Travis Bracht
314.638.8770

Bayless

Mrs. Dawn Thieman
314.256.8612

Brentwood

Ms. Colleen Lohbeck
314.962.4507

Clayton

Dr. Greg Batenhorst
314.854.6023

Hancock Place

Mrs. Lisa Charles
314.544.1300, ext. 199

Kirkwood

Dr. Shirleas Washington
314.213.6105

Lindbergh

Mr. Chuck Triplett
314.729.2400, ext. 1815

Mehlville

Dr. Brian Lane
314.467.5007

Parkway

Ms. Rakiyah "Rocky" Talavedra
314.415.7060

Dr. Charlotte Ijei
314.415.5063

Pattonville

Dr. Donette Green
314.213.8090

Ms. Helen Weissler
314.213.8075

Rockwood

Mr. Terry Harris
636.733.2177

Valley Park

Mrs. Vickie Pardeck
636.923.3617

Webster Groves

Mr. John M. Thomas (Interim)
314.918.4378

Special School District

Mrs. Mary Lee Burtleman
314.989.8125

STARTING DATES for County Schools

Classes will begin soon in your county school. Make plans now to be at school every day, beginning on the very first day. Watch your mailbox for your bus card about one week prior to the beginning of classes. The first day of school for each county district is listed below:

Affton	August 15, 2012
Bayless	August 14, 2012
Brentwood	August 14, 2012
Clayton	August 15, 2012
Hancock Place	August 16, 2012
Kirkwood	August 21, 2012
Lindbergh	August 16, 2012
Mehlville	August 16, 2012
Parkway	August 14, 2012
Pattonville	August 15, 2012
Rockwood	August 14, 2012
Special/Tech	August 13, 2012
Valley Park	August 14, 2012
Webster Groves	August 14, 2012

Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)

The Voluntary Interdistrict Choice Corporation (VICC) complies fully with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA). FERPA is a law that affords parents and students 18 years of age and older with certain rights with respect to the student's educational records.

A copy of VICC's FERPA statement is included in VICC student handbooks, which can be requested by calling 314.721.8422, ext. 3012. The handbooks are also available on the VICC website at www.choicecorp.org. Click on the link for "City Residents Currently Enrolled in County Schools," and then click on "Voluntary Transfer Program Handbook." The full policy will be published in the next issue of the *Parent Link*.

EMERGENCY Communication System

To improve communication with parents regarding transportation and their child's participation in the St. Louis Student Transfer Program, the Voluntary Interdistrict Choice Corporation uses a telephone broadcast system, similar to ones used in many participating school districts.

This system, provided by School Reach, allows VICC to quickly send all households and parents a pre-recorded message by phone within minutes of a transportation emergency or unplanned event that could significantly delay a child's pick-up for or drop-off from school. These emergencies include traffic jams, bus breakdowns, inclement weather, accidents, etc. The service may also be used from time-to-time to communicate general program announcements or reminders.

This system will simultaneously call a home and one additional cell phone or alternate number for each student's family who needs to be contacted and will deliver a message from Tami Webb, transportation operations manager, or another official with the transfer program. Calls will be delivered to both live (in person) responders and answering machines. Calls not answered and busy signals will be automatically retried by the system two additional times in 15 minute intervals after the initial call.

Your child's school will also continue to separately announce school closings due to snow or weather, via the media or their own phone system. However, in the event your child's district is open, but road conditions are such that VICC's transportation department feels it is not safe to transport students to school, VICC would use this separate system to notify families attending the affected districts in addition to making the standard media announcements.

For this notification system to best operate, it is imperative that you keep your school aware of any future changes in your home and/or cell or alternate/emergency phone numbers. Your school then updates VICC's parent contact records so a separate notification to VICC is not necessary.

Transportation Information

Transportation to and from school is provided by the Voluntary Interdistrict Choice Corporation so long as your child goes to a school in the correct attendance area. The phone number for the transportation staff is 314.721.8657.

Transportation cards with the bus stop location and time are mailed to all transfer families about two weeks before school begins in the fall. If you do not receive your card by one week before the start of school, contact the principal at the school your child will be attending. Please do not call the transportation staff. After the regular school year begins, new cards will be mailed only if it is necessary to make a change to the bus/cab route. Please review each new card carefully, including the effective date, stop location and times and destroy all old cards.

Any day-to-day transportation problems or concerns you may have should be addressed by first calling the bus (or cab) contractor.

These include normal operating issues, such as the following:

- Looking for lost items left on the bus/cab
- Checking on activity bus location
- Questions or cancellations when VICC Transportation office is closed.

Refer to your child's bus card for the appropriate bus/cab company

If the contractor is unable to resolve a concern, or if you have one of the following issues, please call the VICC transportation staff at 314.721.8657:

- Overall routing issues or concerns
- Pick-up or drop-off location concerns
- Concerns with driver or contractor
- Requesting cab or other alternative transportation service in the event your regular bus does not show.

Student Responsibilities

Students are to board their bus/cab only at their assigned stop. They **must arrive at their designated pick-up location 10 minutes before the scheduled pick-up time, and remain at least 15 minutes after the pick-up time**, before calling the transportation staff at 314.721.8657 for advice on alternative transportation. If your children are not at the bus stop a full 10 minutes before the scheduled arrival time and do not wait the full 15 minutes after the scheduled time and they miss the bus, it will be your responsibility to get them to school. The transportation staff does not send alternative transportation in such instances.

For the safety of all children, students must obey general safety rules as well as those established by the school district they are attending. You should obtain a copy of your district's bus regulations and review them with your child. Violations of bus rules can result in a student being removed from riding the bus either on a temporary or permanent basis. If a bus suspension occurs, it becomes the parents' responsibility to transport the child to and from school for the duration of the suspension.

Parent Responsibilities

Transportation may run late and/or routes may not be firmly in place during the first few weeks of school. Please make sure your child knows exactly what to do if his or her bus does not arrive. This includes knowing where to go and whom to call. Also make sure your child knows what is expected when he or she is dropped off at the end of the school day. If you normally meet your child at the bus stop, be sure your child understands what to do if you are not there.

If the transportation route to which your child is assigned does not operate in a timely manner, or other problems arise, please communicate with the VICC transportation office.

It is important for parents to keep the school as well as the district contact person informed of **any changes in either the home phone number or the cell or alternate/emergency phone number** for your child. Also, be sure to request that this information be forwarded to the transportation staff.

If You Move

If you move during the summer, call the principal at the county school your child has been or will be attending, or that district's contact person immediately. All districts have central office personnel who work during the summer to handle such situations. Please remember, **it takes up to 10 working days to make a transportation change**. If you are going to move during the academic year, be sure to notify your building principal or district contact person at least two weeks before you move. If you move outside of your school's attendance area, you will need to request a transfer to a school in your new attendance area, or else provide your own transportation in order to remain at your original school.

General Safety Rules

Please review the general safety rules with your student. These can be found in your transfer program handbook. Please refer to the box below if you need a copy of the handbook.

Student Safety

Help us protect your children as they travel to and from school. Certain types of children's clothing can create a hazard as your child exits the bus. Especially dangerous are jacket and sweatshirt drawstrings, long backpack straps, long scarfs or any other loose clothing. Such clothing could become caught in the bus handrail, door or other bus equipment as the child exits the bus. Please take the time to check your children's clothing. Also talk with your child about the behavior and safety rules.

Trespass Policy

To bolster the safety of students riding buses to school, the VICC Board adopted the following trespass policy:

"Trespass occurs when anyone boards a school bus without prior approval from VICC. Any VICC-designated person (including students), contractor or school staff whose job responsibilities require him/her to be on a school bus shall be authorized and not be considered trespassing. Only with prior approval from VICC or a contractor may any parent, guardian or member of the general public be allowed on a bus at any time."

Be sure to review the transportation section in the Voluntary Transfer Program Handbook (pages 9-21) with your child before the start of school.

If you need a handbook, please call 314.721.8422, ext. 3012, or visit our website: www.choicecorp.org