



# Vermillion Public Schools FOUNDATION

Tanager Update Winter 25-26

Supporting Opportunities to Learn

## Stepping into Learning: ActiveFloor Brings Movement and Engagement to Elementary Students

With the support from the Vermillion Public School Foundation, students at Vermillion Elementary School now have a new, exciting way to engage with their lessons — through movement and play with an ActiveFloor system.

Ashlie Jacobs, the Vermillion School District's Technology Coordinator, initiated the idea of utilizing an interactive floor and worked with VPSF for over 8 months to make its purchase a reality.

ActiveFloor is an interactive projection system that transforms the floor into a dynamic learning space. The system comes with access to a wide range of pre-built educational games aligned to curriculum standards. Even better, teachers can customize these games or create their own using any computer or mobile device.

The system allows teachers to select the subject, theme, age group, and even game universe, tailoring each experience to their students' needs. They can also assign game creation as homework, giving students the chance

to design and share their own educational games, turning learners into creators. Within the school, games can be shared among teachers, saving time and encouraging collaboration throughout the school year.

The goal is to provide a small-group active learning experience that integrates seamlessly into any subject. The ActiveFloor will be housed in a common area and rotated between grade levels based on teacher sign-ups, allowing flexible and equitable access for all students.

Research shows that students learn more effectively when they're actively involved. An interactive floor supports this by promoting movement, creativity, and interaction — all while reinforcing academic content. The games are cross-curricular and can be easily adapted for multiple grade levels.

We're excited to see how Vermillion's educators and students bring learning to life with this innovative tool. Thank you to our community supporters for making this active learning opportunity possible!



Vermillion students learn while moving using the ActiveFloor system.

## Preister Receives Mart Scholarship

The VPSF is proud to announce Karson Preister as the recipient of the Doug Mart Scholarship for 2025.

This scholarship, established in memory of Doug Mart, reflects Doug's enduring belief in the value of hands-on learning, skilled trades, and the importance of practical, purpose-driven careers.

Karson Preister has demonstrated exceptional dedication to both his academics and his future career goals. With a strong work ethic, a commitment to learning, and a clear passion for technical education, Karson exemplifies the values and vision behind the Doug Mart Scholarship.

Karson began the next step in his education at Mitchell Technical Institute in the Power Line Construction and Maintenance program. He will continue to carry forward the legacy of Doug Mart—someone who believed in the power of skilled work, community, and character.

The VPSF extends its congratulations to Karson and its heartfelt thanks to the donors who support the Doug Mart Scholarship and ensure Doug's legacy lives on through the success of students like Karson.

## Green Eggs and Ham Breakfast Helps First-Graders Celebrate Read Across America Day

A flurry of excitement and noise filled the air the morning of February 28 as Vermillion Elementary's first graders piled into the school's lunchroom. For more than a decade, the Vermillion Public Schools Foundation has hosted its annual Green Eggs and Ham Breakfast; the first one held at Vermillion's new elementary school.

The beloved event celebrates Read Across America Day and Dr. Seuss' birthday on March 2. The green eggs and ham breakfast has become a rite of passage for Vermillion's first graders, with several mentioning that they had older siblings who had attended in the past and they were so excited that it was now their turn.

Each student received a Dr. Seuss-themed gift bag with Seuss

socks, a Dr. Seuss book and other goodies inside. Mike Phelan, representing the Vermillion Public School Board, provided an engaging reading of *Fox in Socks*, a favorite filled with classic Dr. Seuss tongue twister rhymes.

As in years past, volunteers served green eggs and ham, fruit, and milk or juice to the first graders. But the real star of the show? The adven-

turous first graders, most of whom bravely – but a little cautiously – tried the curious green eggs and ham prepared by the Vermillion elementary school lunch staff. While some preferred the fruit and juice to the green tinted breakfast dish, many dolloped seconds onto their plates in a scene fitting for Dr. Seuss' famous *Green Eggs and Ham* book. They did so like the green eggs and ham event!




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Vermillion students enjoy their green eggs and ham breakfast, but a few were "cautious" about the oddly-colored eggs.

## Vermillion Elementary School playground offers Accessible Fun for All Area Children

As building costs increased during the construction of the new Vermillion Elementary School, the Vermillion School District asked the Vermillion Public School Foundation to help raise funds to be used for playground equipment for children of all abilities. VPSF set an original fundraising goal of \$150,000. Thanks to the donations and grants from many individuals and organizations we surpassed the original goal and raised over \$200,000.

The items added to the elementary school playground created a play area accessible to all and included a Sway Fun® Glider with Ramp, a molded bucket seat swing with harness and chains, and a We-Go-Round® built at surface level for easy access. Additional new playground equipment pieces were purchased from Dakota Playground and

Landscape Structures and include a bongo panel, gear panel, ring-a-bell panel, and tic-tac-toe panel, all of which are accessible due to the rubber surfacing option which provide great peer-to-peer play.

Jeff and Devin Gilbertson's two children have benefited from the new equipment. Lucas (6th Grade) and Nora (3rd Grade) were born with Joubert Syndrome, a rare, genetic brain malformation in the part of the brain that controls cognitive and motor functions. This has particularly affected their balance, coordination and vision.

Devin stated, "Nonetheless, both Luke and Nora thrive off peer interactions. Having an inclusive playground has allowed them to maneuver the area easier, with confidence, which in return has helped them become more independent.

Nora loves the swings. She has

mentioned several times how she can go and get on the swings all by herself where on the old playground she couldn't because there was a hole under the swings. Her goal for herself is to climb to the top of the slide independently, which requires a great amount of balance, and slide down it."

Devin feels the inclusive playground was very well thought out and has something for kids of all abilities. Additional equipment that would aid in their development would be wobble stools or spinning chairs.

Vermillion is one of the few communities in the region to have an inclusive playground, and the VPSF thanks all of our donors for making this dream a reality for the children in the area. A welcoming space where Lucas and Nora can join their classmates in outdoor play is a success for all students.

**Our Thanks to the Donors from July 2024 to June 2025, Our Partners in Serving Students****In Honor of:**

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***Thank you!*****Find out more and  
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Kindergarten teachers used experiential learning funds from VPSF to take students to a pumpkin patch, something many would never have experienced.