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Photo by Maddie Bergstrom

Over 200 students participated in this year's Country View Color Run, which raised over \$10,000 for the Country View PTO. For more images, head to veronapress.com

## Ready ... set ... color run!

### Country View Color Run raises over \$10,000 for Verona PTO

BY MADDIE BERGSTROM  
Staff Reporter

It was hard to miss the bursts of color in the air coming from the Country View Elementary School grounds on Friday, May 19 when over 200 students prepared to run around the school's field for the 2023 Color Run.

Students arrived in white T-shirts designed for the event – most decorated with original art – and left covered in bright colors from head to toe.

The Country View Color Run is an

event where student fundraising is combined with community donations to support activities and educational opportunities provided by the PTO (Country View Community Collaborative) – a registered 501(c)(3) organization, according to a news release.

Country View students and their families live throughout Fitchburg and Verona.

During the run, Sugar River Pizza Company passed out pizza to attendees and families received orange "swag bags" with goodies to take home provided by event sponsors. Students from the Verona Area High School track team led the young racers through a warmup.

Students, families and community

businesses raised over \$10,000 for the event, surpassing the initial goal. Donations to the PTO are used to fund teacher grants for classroom materials and books, playground equipment and supplies, an annual school dance, family movie nights, staff appreciation efforts, student T-shirts and more, according to the release.

"I am so grateful to have the PTO organize this amazing event," Country View Principal Jessica Beem said in the release. "I cannot thank the community and parents enough for their support and generosity that allows our students to take part in this joyous event!"

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### City of Verona

## The cost of living in Verona

### New workforce housing development aims to create local affordable options

BY MADDIE BERGSTROM  
Staff Reporter

City of Verona Mayor Luke Diaz believes if people are good enough to work in Verona, they're also good enough to live in Verona.

"Verona is a really nice community to live in – the schools are good, there's a lot of nice, natural features," he said. "Our downtown is really kind of coming up, so a lot of people want to live here."

While Epic Systems drives a lot of growth in Verona, Diaz said communities across Dane County are dealing with increasing populations and a housing supply that hasn't kept up with demand.

As a result, many people are struggling to find a place to live amidst a housing shortage and lack of affordable options. However, one recent development in Verona – called Schoolhouse Yards – helps address the need for affordable options by bringing workforce housing to the city.

Kendra Bishop – director of marketing and public relations for The Alexander Company – said the idea

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### City of Verona

## Diaz declares first Friday in June Gun Violence Awareness Day

Community can wear orange to honor victims of gun violence, raise awareness

BY MADDIE BERGSTROM  
Staff Reporter

Friday, June 2, 2023 will be known as Gun Violence Awareness Day in the City of Verona.

During a Monday, May 22 Common Council meeting, Mayor Luke Diaz read a proclamation to declare the first Friday in June as a day to honor and remember all victims and survivors of gun violence, as well as declare that the country must do more to end the public health crisis.

Every day, more than 120 Americans are killed by gun violence, the proclamation reads. In Wisconsin, there are 678 gun deaths per year.

"Gun violence prevention is more important than ever as we see an increase in firearm homicides, and nonfatal shootings across the country, increased calls to domestic violence hotlines and an increase in city gun violence," the proclamation states.

Anyone can join the campaign by wearing orange on Friday, June 2 to raise awareness about gun violence.

Verona resident and Moms Demand Action member Lauren Cohen thanked the council for continued support over the years of declaring National Gun Violence Awareness Day and wearing orange during

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# Living: New workforce development demonstrates need for affordable housing

Continued from page 1

for Schoolhouse Yards came to fruition in early 2020 when the city issued a public call for proposals to reimagine the site of the old Sugar Creek Elementary School.

“We partnered with Steve Brown Apartments to respond, and the rest is history,” she said. “Many of our team members live in Verona and brought valuable insight to the process, and we’re thrilled to be providing housing in a community we also consider home.”

The apartment complex is a collection of five two-story buildings organized around a central clubhouse building, with most apartments having direct walk-outs or even direct private garage access, Bishop said. Due to this, the units feel more like a townhome than a traditional apartment.

Bishop said the entire redevelopment was intended to create an inspiring, multi-generational, pedestrian-friendly community hub knit into Verona – an extension of downtown.

“It all has a very town square feel to it, with its cohesive mix of park space, a variety of housing options and neighborhood-serving retail spaces coming soon,” she said.

As a workforce housing development, Schoolhouse Yards requires applicants to have annual household incomes falling below 50% or 60% of the annual median income in the area. Bishop said the apartments were very quick to lease – largely before the buildings even officially opened – demonstrating the great need for affordable housing options in Verona.

At present, only 13 apartments are available in the building, most of which she said are in the two buildings that only recently completed construction.

By bringing more workforce housing into the area, Bishop said it ensures options are available for employees who otherwise could not afford to live near where they work, including restaurant and service workers, office staff, retail employees, first responders and many others.

Additionally, workforce housing is

beneficial to local businesses as well – as it becomes easier for employers to find workers, and with housing options near work, people are more likely to stay with their employer, Diaz said.

At some point, he said people may get sick of looking for housing or the commutes associated with it – as transit costs are a significant part of housing that isn’t always considered. If someone works in Verona but lives 40 minutes away – that’s a large investment of both time and money to get to work.

“So, sometimes it might even make a little bit more sense to pay more to live in Verona and be closer to work,” he said.

Developing workforce housing does not come without its challenges, however, as every developer faces rising interest rates, increasing construction costs and supply chain disruptions, Bishop said.

One additional challenge with workforce housing is combatting perceived myths, many of which she said are unfounded – as neighbors, friends and family need and live in these housing options.

“Fortunately, this was never the case while we worked on Schoolhouse Yards,” Bishop said. “Even before construction started, we received a lot of messages of support from those living in the community.”

Diaz said luxury housing tends to dominate the market but doesn’t cost much more to build than middle-class or affordable housing. Despite building costs being fairly similar, companies can charge a lot more rent in luxury housing.

“I think that’s why in the market you tend to see builders go for the luxury housing, because they can make more money – which is basic market incentive,” he said.

Looking ahead, Diaz said there are currently a fair number of housing developments underway in the city, including single-family homes, apartments, townhomes and multi-use buildings. At this point, he said Verona needs all types of

housing options.

Diaz said the city is working to make sure that housing developments – when it makes sense for the city – are allowed to be built.

Throughout the process of developing Schoolhouse Yards to bring workforce housing to the area, Bishop said the City of

Verona was excellent to work with.

“They truly understand their residents and want to serve them as best as they can, while also looking towards the future,” she said.

Contact reporter Maddie Bergstrom at [mbergstrom@wisconsinmediagroup.com](mailto:mbergstrom@wisconsinmediagroup.com)

## Just The Facts

The following housing developments are in various stages throughout the City of Verona:

**Dreger Property, 7085 County Hwy PD** – Approved in January 2023 for 427 multifamily units on 33 acres, around one and a half acres for commercial development and two acres for parkland

**Kettle Creek North, north of Country View Elementary School** – Under construction and approved for 174 single-family lots

**Marty Property (Arden Glen), County Hwy PD and Shady Oak Ln.** – Phase 1 final plat for 102 lots and 12 outlots. Approved in December 2022 for 258 single-family and 148 twin homes

**1050 North Edge Trail** – Approved in May 2022 for a mixed-use building with 64 apartment units and 5,096 square feet of commercial space with a pick-up window

**148 and 150 Paoli Street** – Initial review is underway for an eight-unit apartment building

**101 Prairie Heights Drive** – Under construction, 20 townhomes were approved in April 2022 and a condo plat for 10 units in July 2022

**Prairie Oaks Drive, Lot 2** – Approved in June 2022 for 57 apartment units

**Sugar Creek Commons, Building D** – Under construction, approved in May 2022 for 141 apartment units

**West Madison Bible Church and Wirtanen Properties (Avalon Ridge)** – Approved in July 2022 for 502 apartment units and eight lots

**410 and 420 West Verona Avenue** – Under construction, a General Development Plan for a three story, 63-unit apartment building was approved in December 2020. A condo plat for three units was approved in April 2023

**Whispering Coves, south of County Hwy PD and west of County Hwy M** – Approved with conditions in November 2019 for 214 lots and 29 outlots

**East of 233 Wildcat Way** – Approved with conditions in September 2022 for a two-story 88-unit assisted living and memory care building

**The Woods at Cathedral Point, 1001 Wild Willow Way** – Under construction, approved with conditions in May 2023 for 100-unit multi-family apartments in two buildings

**The Woods at Cathedral Point, southeast corner of County Hwy M and Range Trl.** – Approved in February 2020 for 53 acres for 100-unit multi-family, 18 twin, 38 alley accessed single-family and 101 street accessed single-family homes

For more information, visit [ci.verona.wi.us/479/Development-Projects](http://ci.verona.wi.us/479/Development-Projects).

## Obituary

### Justine Emily Schmid



Schmid

Verona - Justine Emily Schmid, age 96, passed away peacefully at her home on Saturday, May 13, 2023, surrounded by her loving family. She was born on October 13, 1926, in rural Dane County to Ed and Lulu Strassman and was the last survivor of 8 children. Justine attended school at Paoli Secondary Graded School and Verona High School. She was united in marriage to Robert (Bob) Schmid in 1944 and had 65 years together.

Mom and Dad worked the 180

acre Schmid farm just west of Verona, raising 9 children. Mom was a great cook and baker but also milked cows, threw hay bales, and butchered chickens. She loved working in her large garden in her spare time and canned everything possible. She would leave housework to help chase a cow in the barn or hold a wrench or flashlight to help Dad fix things.

Grandma Frieda (Schmid) was such a blessing when Tommy, the oldest, was in the hospital for three months and when they lost him a year later, due to a ruptured appendix. Grandma Frieda helped in many other ways and was a Godsend.

Mom attended the Zwingli United Church of Christ in Mt. Vernon and was part of the lady’s guild. Mom was on a softball team (the Pabst Farmettes), coached by Dad, winning some games but always having lots of fun. She loved to bowl and was on a bowling team with 4 daughters, sponsored by Vandegrift Electric and later Verona Bowl, traveling to various parts of the state for bowling tournaments. Mom, while farming, worked at Four Winds Nursing Home, later

at Park Printing for 25 years.

After retiring from farming, Mom and Dad moved to Verona where they resided for 32 years. For many years Mom followed sport car racing, being a huge fan of Matt Kenseth. She also loved taking the car for a spin around Verona and even further, still driving at the age of 96!! Mom was always willing to help her elderly friends to and from appointments and shopping and her weekly coffee time with friends. Mom enjoyed weekly trips to the casino and road trips with her daughters, doing puzzles, reading a good book, playing cards and dice, and keeping a daily journal. She loved family gatherings at Christmas and the summer Schmid family auctions where proceeds were used for many worthy causes. Mom worked hard, loved life and was a caring, giving, fun person. Her family called her the “Energizer Bunny”!! She will be greatly missed by her family and many others.

She is survived by 8 children, Sharon Anderson, Patricia (Bob) Matts, Beverly (Dennis) Tucker, Coleen (Dave) Downing, Sandra Carley, Nancy (Mark)

Downs, Bill (Sara) Schmid, Allen (Susan) Schmid, 19 grandchildren, 35 great grandchildren, 4 great-great grandchildren, all whom she dearly loved, as well as many relatives and friends. Mom is preceded in death by her husband, Robert (Bob) Schmid, son Tommy, infant baby boy, siblings James (Mary) Strassman, Carl (Kate) Strassman, Norman (Angie) Strassman, Howard (Helen) Strassman, Eddie Strassman, Mary Lou (Bob) Short, and Genevieve (Ed) Flynn, son-in-law Doug Anderson, and great grandson Zachary Jenkins.

Special thanks to SSM Hospice, Dr. Gorman of UW Health, and Gary Bongey of Hometown Pharmacy.

A private family service will be held at the Mt. Vernon cemetery. A Celebration of Life will be held on June 24 at the Verona Town Hall, 7669 County Highway PD, Verona, WI. from 1:00 to 5:00pm.

Memorials may be made to Zwingli United Church of Christ in Mt Vernon WI or a charity of your choice.

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