

# MOUNT VERNON VOICE

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## WPHS and MVHS Will Get Turf Fields

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By this time next year, West Potomac High Athletic Club Booster president Rick Genuario expects the brown grass on the school's football field will be replaced with artificial turf.

Friday night, before the start of the game against Annandale, VOICE (Virginians Organized for Interfaith Community Engagement) hosted a brief ceremony thanking Mount Vernon Supervisor Gerry Hyland, Lee Supervisor Jeff McKay and Fairfax County School Board member Dan Storck (Mount Vernon) for their efforts to bring artificial turf fields

to both West Potomac and Mount Vernon high schools.

Both schools will be receiving approximately \$1.5 million from Fairfax County and Fairfax County Public Schools towards the construction of the fields which will put the schools, both of which have relatively high levels of students receiving free or reduced price lunches, on equal footing with the wealthier schools in the western portion of the county.

The local community, however, is doing its part, having already raised \$50,000, with another \$50,000 needed to be raised by Feb. 15, according to Genuario.

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Staff photo/Steve Hunt

Speakers at the event were Lee Supervisor Jeff McKay, Fairfax County School Board member Dan Storck (Mount Vernon), left, and West Potomac Athletic Booster Club president Rick Genuario, with VOICE leader Rev. Tuck Bowerfind, right.

## West Potomac, Mt. Vernon Highs to Get Turf Fields

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Genuario also noted that Hyland has been successful in generating \$2.2 million in proffers from businesses which will be building developments along the Richmond Highway corridor in the next few years for turf fields at the schools.

Genuario told the crowd in the stands that he credits Hyland, McKay and Storck, as well as the members of both boards, who not only formed the turf field task force, but found a way to actually come up with the funding.

McKay said he has students in his district attending five different high schools and with the goal to eventually have all the schools equipped with turf fields, he commented that he couldn't be prouder of the super-



Staff photo/Steve Hunt

VOICE supporters held banners during the program.

visors and school board members who worked together with the com-

munity to make it a reality. It was only a few years ago when

the need was identified, but the total cost of the turf fields for the south county area — upwards of \$8 million — made achieving that seem impossible at the time, he said.

However, with the local government, school board, school and business communities all working together that seemingly impossible goal will be realized,

"It's all about the kids," McKay said.

Storck noted that as West Potomac was the first to reach its initial goal of \$50,000, towards the total \$100,000 goal, that it will be first in line for the turf field for the Mount Vernon area.

Genuario noted that parents in the school communities in the western end of the county have turf fields

already because they were able to raise the total money themselves.

"They have the ability, we don't," he said.

And while he credited the boards with doing the right thing for the students in the south county area, he added that "our group," including the VOICE organization made up of the community and the congregations of several local churches including Bethlehem Baptist, Good Shepherd Catholic, St. Luke's Episcopal and Mount Vernon Unitarian raised the awareness for the needs of the schools in the Richmond Highway corridor area.

For more information on turf fields at West Potomac, or to make a donation, go to [www.turfwestpotomac.com](http://www.turfwestpotomac.com).