



VMS Weekly News - March 24, 2017

"Everything you say to a child is absorbed, catalogued, and remembered." ~Maria Montessori

Alumni Spotlight: Elizabeth Williamson

Montessori was the base on which I built my academic and social career. The impact Montessori had on my life is astounding, and I would not trade the experience for anything. The most valuable lesson I carried away from VMS was how to be a proactive independent learner.

Learning from my experiences and my failures at a young age made me more resilient and more determined as I grew older. Problem solving by myself instead of being spoon fed or corrected by a teacher helped me think more deeply and in a broader way. I discovered how to stick with a problem until I found a solution.

What I also loved about the independent learning structure was being able to learn about the subjects that interested me. Math became one of my fascinations during my years at Montessori. My parents observed my excitement towards the bead activities and my numerous number lines/rolls. Today, math continues to be one of my academic interests as I progress through my high school years.

I am currently a high honors junior at Martha's Vineyard Regional High School, an avid participant in the music department, and a two-year state champion tennis player. Although my Montessori years are behind me, Montessori continues to surround me. My dance partner for the school musical, *Guys and Dolls*, was one of my former classmates, Alex Vasiliadis. Other VMS classmates, such as Ben Nadelstein and Harold Lawry, had starring roles and are all still close friends of mine. My best friend, as well as my state champion doubles partner, is yet another VMS graduate, Victoria Scott. These friends exhibit the same



Save The Dates

On **Friday, April 7th** at 10:00 a.m., all VMS students will be attending a performance by Andrés Vera at the Unitarian Church. During their regular violin lesson time, Rebecca and Andrés will give the students their violin lesson.

Andrés Vera is a soloist and chamber and orchestral musician, who has performed in countless venues throughout the United States, Europe, the Caribbean, and Asia. He performs the classical cello and the baroque cello.

He is the newest member of the Grammy-nominated Quartet San Francisco, a crossover string quartet that excels in multiple styles — from jazz to tango, pop to funk, blues to bluegrass, gypsy swing to big band and beyond. You can follow their tour dates [here](#).

Andrés is a founding member of San Francisco's acclaimed Cello Street Quartet, with whom he traveled in 2014 to Russia, Kosovo, and Hungary for the U.S. State Department.

On **Saturday, April 8th**, there will be a collective concert (all schools) at the Old Whaling Church at 4:00 p.m. Some of our Montessori students have been invited to play the "frog" piece that Andrés selected.

On **Monday, April 10th**, at the MV Museum in Edgartown, from 4:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. All students from Vineyard Montessori

Calendar

Tuesday: Chess begins this week. 3:00 p.m. - 4:00 p.m. Brahmin, MVRHS Chess captain will be here to play chess!

Thursday, April 6th: Special Visiting Day

Friday, April 7th: All VMS students to attend performance by Andrés Vera. 10:00 a.m. at Unitarian Church

Saturday, April 8th: Family Yard Day from 9:30 a.m. to Noon

Saturday, April 8th: Violin & Cello Concert at 4:00 p.m. at the Old Whaling Church featuring VMS students and all schools.

Monday, April 10th: Open House 4:00 a.m. - 6:00 p.m. at the Martha's Vineyard Museum, Edgartown featuring the VMS Elementary Health Hen Project.

Monday, April 17th - Friday, April 21: School Closed - Spring Vacation

Monday, April 24th: School Reopens

Thursday, April 27th: Spring Social at Farm Neck Cafe, Oak Bluffs

Monday, May 1st: Monday, May 1st begins Teacher Appreciation Week

Thursday, May 11th: Grand-Friends Visiting Day

Thursday, May 11th: Noon dismissal for Parent-Teacher Conferences

Friday, May 12th: Noon dismissal for Parent-Teacher

Elementary classroom (ages 5-13) will be presenting *Here Today, Gone Tomorrow - Lessons Learned from the Heath Hen*.

This exhibit is the culminating project of a 15 week unit that basically uses the Heath Hen (who became extinct on Martha's Vineyard in 1932) as a poster child to explore complex issues of biodiversity and habitat. Students will share artwork, field journals, maps and graphs to demonstrate their newly acquired scientific and historic knowledge.

This project was funded by The Massachusetts Cultural Council with collaborators Biodiversity works and The Martha's Vineyard Museum. With actual Heath Hens!

Conferences

Monday, May 29th: Memorial Day - School Closed

Thursday, June 15th: Last Day of School / Field Day

Friday, June 16th: 10:00 a.m. Graduation Ceremony, the Tabernacle at MV Camp Meeting Association

Primary 1 Classroom

- Miss Ty, Miss Cristina and Miss Rebecca

We are marching towards spring... even though there are still many chilly days! We have taken down the snowflakes from the windows, and the children can now cut out some paper flowers to decorate the space. There are a few intrepid crocuses out in the playground that have bravely made an appearance, and they delight the children. So, I

realized it is time to resurrect the donation of flowers to the classroom so the children can practice the beautification of their environment through flower arranging. They were so engaged and enthusiastic about this exercise. In a small bouquet, there are several stems of flowers. With a teacher's help, the child clips one stem to a length suitable for a small (very small) vase. A regular supermarket bouquet can usually last a week with this method! If you happen to see a bouquet, and would like to share it with the class, please bring it in for our flower arranging activity. Spring is truly coming, I can feel it, and maybe this activity will urge it to hurry.



One sensorial exploration has been the on-going learning of the names of three-dimensional figures: the Geometric Solids -- sphere, rectangular prism, square-based pyramid, cube. We frequently review the shapes. Recently, we began a group "hunt" for shapes in our environment. What are the same shapes as

these solids? The children were delighted to find that there are many rectangular prisms (all the boxes in the room!), cubes, several spheres, and even a few cones! We have so much fun with this examination of our environment.

The last item I wanted to talk to you about is recess wear. It is still often very cold out on our playground, as the breeze is usually blowing off the harbor. Even when it is sunny in the morning, please look at your weather app on your phone or on the news. The high is often in the 30s, but the "feels like" temperature is only in the teens. We go out every day except when it is raining, and some students do not arrive with hats and gloves. Others are cozy warm with gloves, mittens, hats, and coats. Children can always take off layers if the wind dies down or the temperatures rise, but it is hard to find extra layers for those that get cold. Thanks for attending to this matter!



Primary 2 Classroom

- Miss Chris and Miss Holly

Have you ever had one of those days where your child seems to need all of your attention just as the phone rings?

Or when you are in the middle of having a conversation with another person?

Both parents and teachers have to deal with the problem of kids needing and wanting attention at times when it just can't be given. You can help your child by teaching him/her how to wait patiently while being respectful of your child's needs and feelings at the same time. Montessori teachers often use a simple technique to teach kids how to interrupt. It is so simple and yet respectful to both parties. When a child needs the adult's attention, the child places a hand on the adult's shoulder or arm. The adult respectfully acknowledges the child by gently touching the child's hand. When the adult is finished working or talking to another person, the child will then have the opportunity to talk with the adult. If the adult is standing up and the child is unable to touch the adult's shoulder, the child can place a hand on the adult's hip. The child's hand rests quietly, without tapping or saying the adult's name. If the child is tapping or repeatedly calling out the adult's name, the adult can raise one finger as a sign to wait peacefully. This practice works extremely well and can work with all ages.

Give it a try!



The children are getting anxious to plant some things in our raised garden beds.

This week, Miss Avabrought in pea seeds for the children to explore. The children dipped a cotton ball into water and placed it in a small plastic bag along

with a couple of pea seeds. They laced a piece of yarn into the top of the plastic bag and created seed necklaces to wear. Hopefully in a few days, these seeds will sprout and then can be transplanted into the garden beds.

I have introduced a new lesson on animals and the continents on which they live. The children match animals to their respective continent and then talk about which animals live on each continent. The initial lesson uses the continent map so there are only seven animals. Every individual continent will have its own set of animals that are indigenous to that continent. The children can then complete a coloring sheet that corresponds to that lesson.



Elementary Classroom

- Miss Irene and Miss Nora

The science of Moths! Last Friday, we had a special guest: Dr. Paul Goldstein, one of the foremost Lepidoptera specialist from The Smithsonian Institute in Washington D.C. His visit was tied in with the frost bottom extension of the heath hen unit. The students learned that there are 180,000 recognized moth species with more being discovered all the time. They were surprised to learn that butterflies are a subspecies of moths and only 20,000 exist. On Monday, we painted absolutely beautiful moths that exist on the island. These are for our show on April 10th at the MV Museum, Edgartown from 4pm - 6pm.



On Wednesday, we began our Island Grown School (IGS) project: First Peas to the Table 2017. First Peas to the Table is an island-wide competition for grades 3-5, hosted by IGS and inspired by the book, "First Peas to the Table: How Thomas Jefferson Inspired a School Garden", by Susan Grisby, and modeled after the original competition held by Thomas Jefferson at the gardens of Monticello. The goal of all participating classes is to present the MOST shelled peas by June 12th. This all culminates with a celebratory event where the winner is declared. All participating students will be rewarded for their hard work, and plenty of peas will be eaten!

Elementary I students continue the vast extensions of the Timeline of Life. This week, they were introduced to the five kingdoms: Monera, Protista, Fungi,

Plants, and Animals. We are now working on the animal kingdom, starting with vertebrates and invertebrates. Elementary II students presented their President reports. They were just as inspiring as the Elementary I students' reports.

They have all become great public speakers since their experience with Montessori Model United Nations.



Late Day

- Miss Weezie and Miss Cristina

Our afternoon students have been creating a variety of expressive faces using foam sheets. We are talking about how to recognize how people feel by looking at their faces. However, the only way that we can



really know how people feel is if they tell us. Examples include: happy, sad, angry, surprised and frightened. Books on this topic include "Frances Face Maker" and "Smile".

Children's outdoor play is essential for establishing healthy sensory systems and supporting higher-level attention and learning. Fidgeting can be a strong indicator that children are not getting enough movement throughout the day. We are grateful that the Montessori philosophy embraces all aspects of movement, within the classroom and outside the classroom, that satisfy the organic urge within a child. Hopefully, the weather will co-operate soon, and we will be able to take some of our spring arts-and-crafts projects outside.

Recommended Reading

"Montessori Builds Innovators" by Andrew McAfee

"Why Small Schools Work: Good Things Come in Small Packages" by Tim Seldin

"Choosing Montessori for Kindergarten" by Colleen, "Children First, Always."

"Develop Leaders the Montessori Way" by Ambiga Dhiraj

Book Corner for Parents

"Last Child in the Woods": Saving our children from Nature-Deficit Disorder by Richard Louv

"Montessori Madness!": A parent to parent argument for Montessori education by Trevor Eissler

"Montessori: The Science Behind the Genius" by Angeline Stoll Lillard

Book Corner for Children

"What Do You Do With An Idea?" by Kobi Yamada

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Pre-k through sixth grade.*

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