“Early childhood education is the key to the betterment of society.”
~ Maria Montessori

VMS Elementary Students Perform at the Winter String Concert

Congratulations to Carly and Grace Coggins and Danny and Tomas Carreno for their performance in the Winter String Concert at the Performing Arts Center at MVRHS. Your commitment to the 7:00 a.m. weekly practices really showed.

Dine to Donate

Thursday, January 19th is the VMS Dine to Donate at Offshore Ale Company. Offshore donates 20% of our lunch and/or dinner eaten at the restaurant. Please present the below coupon to your server. Feel free to share with your friends and family. Avoid waiting in line by calling Offshore Ale Company at (508) 693-2626 and make your reservation for the evening.
Save the Date
Big Night Out - May 6th

Our “Big Night Out” is coming up in the spring. Mark your calendars for Saturday, May 6th at the Harborview Hotel in Edgartown. The subcommittee is working together on creating an event you won’t want to miss!

Primary 1 Classroom
-Miss Ty, Miss Cristina and Miss Rebecca

What a wonderful snowfall we had! The children and I had a great time playing in it on that first day after the storm. By the second day, as it got a bit warmer, we were enjoying it even more. The transition to mud came quickly, but you would be surprised (or perhaps not so surprised) at how much fun the water and mudpies were! We do go outside every day that it is not raining. If it is very cold, we still go out for twenty minutes or so. Please send your children to school with snow pants, gloves and hats, as well as their coats and boots during the cold weather. Outside time is essential to all the children. After a morning inside with their quiet, concentrated work, it is important for them to have unstructured, physically active play time.

Staying on the subject of winter clothing, we must consider the child’s ability to dress him or herself. Part of the Montessori philosophy is that each child should become independent and able to care for themselves. Please help us by TEACHING your child about the intricacies of putting on boots, gloves, coats, etc. instead of doing it for him or her. This may take a little extra time each morning, but you would be surprised how well each of them does when you are not here. “Every help is a hindrance” is something we often say. Please try to include clothes for your child that are easy for him or her to maneuver. Thanks!
Primary 2 Classroom  
- Miss Chris and Miss Holly

The children were delighted to be able to play in the first real snow of the year. Getting ready for the outdoors took some time, and luckily we had rehearsed the order in which clothes goes on earlier in the morning. I want to send a huge thank you to those that remembered to label your child’s belongings and for those that are practicing getting dressed with their child at home. It really is such a help to all of us.

The new unit that Miss Ava is introducing to the children is a unit on fiber. This week, she brought in some natural wool and talked with the children about shearing sheep and how the wool can become useful in many ways. The children were able to feel and smell the wool. They decided that it was pretty smelly and dirty so they were able to wash the wool, which will be turned into yarn. Next week, the children will be dying the wool, which will be used the following week to do some finger-knitting.

I always enjoy this time in the school year where so many of the lessons that were introduced in the beginning of the year have now taken on a different meaning for some children. While some children were only able to complete one or two rows of the 100 Board, they are now quickly and easily finishing it all the way to the end. Those children that were just recognizing letter sounds are now blending two and three sounds together. As delighted as I am to see the growth in the children's development, the real delight is observing a child when he/she completes a lesson independently that he/she has been working towards all year. It is that "Ah Ha" moment when everything clicks and the joy of mastery sinks in.
Elementary Classroom
- Miss Irene and Miss Nora

This week, the focus of the museum was on prescribed burns. The lesson started with a viewing of an old news reel of a prescribed burn at the Katama Air Field. The students loved it! Anne, Kendra and Beth created a great game that comprised all of the parts of a prescribed burn, such as the black fire line, the wind direction, fire starters and water backpacks. The students were amazed to see what good comes out of a prescribed burn, including minerals, fauna and wildlife habitats that had been forced out by overgrowth; hence a new environment for the heath hens.

Elementary I students are continuing their cultural studies with timelines. This week, they studied the Three Fundamental Tenses, The Fundamental Needs of Humans and The Stages in the Process of Civilization. Some of the Elementary II students worked hard on long division and long multiplication without manipulatives. Others worked on pre-algebra equations with multiplication, division, addition and subtraction. In language, the students have been focusing on the pronoun -- personal pronouns classified by and according to person, number and gender and then further divided into nominative, objective and possessive case. They continue to study the difference between interrogative and relative pronouns. This is a vast curriculum. Presenting the concepts in a Montessori way and having prior knowledge from the grammar boxes greatly increases the students’ understanding of the strange grammatical rules of the English language.
Late Day
- Miss Weezie and Miss Cristina

Our first real snowfall of the New Year gave us reason to celebrate. The vision of our students frolicking on our snowy playground in their colorful winter wear is a delight! Children are gaining motor skills and self-confidence daily as they dress and undress themselves with these new layers. Play is joyful, and of course, a great deal of fluffy snow is consumed.

This is also an opportune time of year for birding. This can be a fun family event to get out and do together by stalking our feathered friends and enjoying the night sky. Felix Neck is offering a guided "OwlProwl" to coincide with the full "Ice Moon". However, an OwlProwl can take place closer to home, even in your own backyard. Consider reading Jane Yolen's classic book, "Owl Moon". It is one of our favorites, beautifully written and illustrated, describing a father and son adventure. Have fun! Happy New Year to all of our VMS families.
Summer LEGO Fever

LEtGO Your Mind offers fun and enriching programs using LEGOss in the areas of simple machines and robotics, along with an introduction to stop animation. LEtGO Your Mind Summer Programs are for students between the ages of 4 and 13 and will be offered at VMS this summer. Registration begins on January 13th. To learn about the courses offered, click here. To view the dates of each session offered, click here.

Recommended Reading

"What do P. Diddy, Sergey Brin, and Peter Drucker have in common?" by Glenn Rifkin

"Succeeding at their own pace" by Alex Beam, Boston Globe Columnist

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