"Better than a thousand days of diligent study is one day with a great teacher." - Japanese Proverb

**Next Week is Teacher Appreciation Week! May 6 - 10**

Only 8 Weeks till Summer Camp!

**Visit our website**

**Summer Camp registration is open!** Space is limited so be sure to visit our website and read about this exciting opportunity for both currently enrolled families and the greater Vineyard community.

May Calendar

**Oh Deer** visited us last week to treat our property. They mentioned that this is an especially bad tick season so far. Please check your child regularly!

**This Saturday, May 4:** Big Night Out! See all the details below!

**Next Week, May 6-10:** Teacher Appreciation Week

**Thursday, May 9:** Grand-Friend’s Day (9:30 – 10:30) For Primary & Elementary I Classes
Thursday, May 9 & Friday, May 10: Parent/Teacher Conferences (Noon Dismissal)

Monday, May 27: Memorial Day - No School

Thursday, May 30: Elementary II & Middle School Visiting Day (1:00 - 2:00)

Thursday, June 13: Last Day of School & Field Day

Friday, June 14: End of Year Ceremony (10:00 - 11:00 AM)

Monday, June 24: Summer Camp Begins

VMS Family Association Presents the 24th Annual

**BIG NIGHT OUT**

SAT., May 4th 7-10 PM

Winnetu Resort

What is Big Night Out?
It's the school's largest fundraiser of the year! The money raised allows for scholarships to families in need, art, music and Spanish classes, playground upgrades and more. Joanne Cassidy and The Vine Shakers perform and there's an incredible silent auction. It's a REALLY fun night out for VMS parents, family and friends, and our larger Island community!

How you can help:
- Drop off your ticket payment to the office, [or click here to pay online](#).
(Please return any unused tickets to the office so we can use them at the door!)
Click here to sponsor the event!
Click here to volunteer to help out for a shift at the event!
Invite friends and share our social media posts to help spread the word!

Sneak Peak of Some Silent Auction Items...

Thank you to our Big Night Out Sponsors!
"Reach for the Stars"

"Brightest Star"
In the study of Humanities we finished the study of the Civil War and spent the first weeks of April in an interactive study of the first two world wars. Matthew learned about the US’s tendency to remain isolationist, but our eventual entries into these global conflicts. Along with these studies we read the play *The Diary of Anne Frank*.
We had a wonderful visit to Vineyard Power this month. Erik Peckar, Miss Carrie's brother, works there and guided Matthew and the Upper Elementary students in understanding the upcoming wind energy farm fourteen miles south of Martha's Vineyard on the Outer Continental Shelf. The classes generated a list of 15 or so questions that we wanted to have answered. The questions were in four categories:

1. The physical features of the turbines (distance from shore, size, how they are built on the ocean floor, maintenance, etc.)
2. The effect of the wind farm on the environment: i.e. marine life, birds, and also the effect on fishing industry
3. The actual energy that is generated: how much? how does it get to the land?
4. Vineyard Power & Vineyard Wind: the business, including what training did Erik have to do? Also where are the future jobs in this growing industry?

The questions were answered in fine detail, and Erik had several "stations" of charts, maps, and photographs set out for us. We came away with a few brochures and a beautiful hard-cover book called "Offshore Wind Farm" which is absolutely filled with detailed photographs and existing wind farms in Europe and the actual turbine construction. All the students were engaged in the discussion, asked questions, and learned a lot! Erik was very impressed with the student's knowledge and engagement on the subject matter.

The Middle School "shares" most field experiences with the Upper Elementary, and we enjoyed our first educational experience at Vineyard Golf club. Read all the details and see the pictures in Miss Irene's post!

Elementary II Classroom
- Miss Irene

Warm weather is here and the Elementary II class is looking forward to visiting our garden plot at Thimble Farm. We have been spending a great deal of our time during our sessions with Tim indoors, making several healthy recipes with the kids. Next week we will head back to the farm to check on the lettuce that we planted and start planting some other veggies that we can harvest next fall.

We finished our last renaissance book, *The Prince and the Pauper* and followed up by watching the movie. Students have until the end of the year to read another book of their choice from recommended
reading lists and are assigned a book report. They are also working on a second geography slideshow of countries we know little about. Four of the students are making shelf works for the class which will hopefully last for years. The works are the matching country names of flags for countries in Africa and Asia.

We went on an awesome field trip to Vineyard Power to learn about their work with Vineyard Wind and their future wind farm power project. Students had many questions about how the wind turbines are constructed and how we get the power from these massive turbines to the mainland. We talked about how marine life could be impacted and all of the precautions that they are taking to protect the animals. The kids learned about the jobs in maintenance and safety which will need to be filled for the next 20 years until the lease ends or is renewed. Erik Peckar, our host who has a BS in Renewable Energy from Penn State, spent an hour answering questions, showing large scale maps and photos, and provided every detail of what will be happening in the fall of 2020.

Our class was also welcomed with open arms at Vineyard Golf for a tour of the clubhouse including the pro shop and locker rooms, practice greens and a training building with a golf simulator inside. Eri Seguin the head pro introduced us to his assistant pro Mike, the head Chef, and Jason the Caddie Master who talked about expectations of caddies and what they do. Eri and Mike talked about the game and passed around some clubs explaining what each one does. It is an organic and eco friendly golf course so they have a policy that players carry their own bags, use a caddie and only use a cart if someone has a medical condition or are of a certain age. They use only organic and environmentally safe products on the course itself. We will have 5 lessons in the upcoming weeks beginning with putting and moving up to driving. The kids are extremely excited!

All Elementary II parents should make note that we have Parent/Teacher conferences on May 9th and 10th and they are half days. The main campus will be hosting a visiting day the morning of the 9th before conferences but we will not. Instead, we would like to invite Elementary II parents and grandparents to our last theater class with Joyce Maxner from 1-2 pm on Thursday, May 30th before dismissal. Students and guests will be invited to participate in improv exercises that we have been working on with Joyce this year.
Elementary I Classroom
- Miss Nora

April was a busy month! We started gardening outside in our garden beds with Tim. First we did a little spring cleaning. Then we planted more varieties of peas, lettuce and chives. Levi was kind enough to bring the chives in from his garden to transplant into our garden beds. We have been tracking the pea's growth weekly in anticipation of the Island's “First Peas to the Table” competition.

This month we started golf lessons at the Martha's Vineyard Golf Club. Mr. Eri (Adelaide and Grace's dad) gave us a tour of the club, explained the history of the game and gave us some lessons on golf etiquette. The students were shocked to learn that the game dates back to the 1400's and that a bag of clubs weighs an average of 90 pounds, which caddies must carry for many hours a day!

In April we started Science Fridays. We have been studying magnetism. The students did experiments with magnetic fields, magnetic forces, attracting and repelling, temporary magnets, how magnets behave in water, electromagnetism and the biggest magnet of all, the earth. We studied the compass and learned how the magnetism of the earth will always point a compass north. We made a compass rose on the floor indicating all the cardinal directions. It was wonderful to see the wheels turning inside the children’s head when we looked at the globe and they realized the connection between magnetics, the compass, and the northern and southern
hemispheres. These lessons will segue into our study of the solar system.

Art classes at Sense of Wonder Art Studio continued this month as well. Miss Pam holds an art show in June where the student's artwork can be viewed and taken home. In class we have also done some art projects which will be on display at the Big Night Out - don't miss it!

Primary 2 Classroom
- Miss Chris and Miss Carrie

Don't you wish you could go to work in your pajamas some days? Well the children in our class were able to do just that. Our students came to school in their pajamas and had a wonderful time showing their peers all the different prints and types they had on. Every child was very excited to show off what they wore to school that day. Be on the lookout for crazy sock day coming up in May....

Our peas have begun to sprout in our outdoor garden beds. We will be
monitoring their growth and adding new items to our gardens. Ava continues to do seed activities with the children each week, from seed bingo to parts of the seed. Each week is a new lesson.

Many children are beginning to master lessons that they were introduced to weeks or months ago. The layout of a work is an indirect aim, helping children learn the left to right, top to bottom placement, which eventually will help guide a child when they are reading and writing. When a child is able to finally lay out the Red Rods not only in sequence from shortest to longest, but starting from left to right and top to bottom, that child has now mastered that work. The look on a child's face when he sees that the work looks like it did on the shelf is a rewarding and satisfying achievement.

As a Montessori education differs from a traditional one, children are always working as individuals, moving forward through a curriculum developed just for them. Children at each age and skill level are able to use the same material but in different ways. It meets a need for each child, yet the joy the work brings, no matter what the age or skill level is, can be seen throughout the classroom. For example, the blue board in the Language area has many levels. The first one is to match the letters to the board which is a matching lesson for the younger students. They don't need to know the sounds yet, they just match the symbols. The next step is to find the initial sound of words and match it to a strip on the board. The final step is to create the full word and trace the word on tracing paper. Some children even choose to write the word themselves without tracing it. Depending on the level of the child, there many ways to be successful with the same material.
Primary 1 Classroom
- Miss Cristina and Miss Rebecca

I hope everyone had a wonderful and restful spring vacation. The children were very eager to be back in school and spent the beginning of our first morning back sharing the highlights of their vacation week. They couldn't wait to get back to their lessons and spend time with their friends.

Our classroom is thrilled to have warmer days, and we love going for nature walks when it is warm and sunny. There is so much that we want to start doing outdoors, like hammering, using the water and sand tables, and of course, walking to the beach to find treasures. Ava continues to visit weekly for our gardening lesson, and we are beginning to see signs of new life in the garden beds.

This month we began learning about American Sign Language (ASL). We began with the alphabet and now the children are learning to sign single words such as, 'hi, thank you, please, help, and sorry'. There are materials for them to practice by themselves or with friends. One way we use sign language in our classroom is by representing the first letter of the children's names when they are called to wash their hands. Some children are already even spelling their names using sign language!

ASL is now classified as a world language, the same as Spanish, French, or any other foreign language. Therefore, if a child speaks sign language, the child is considered bilingual. When children are taught English and ASL together, they are processing language using both sides of the brain. This gives the children two places to recall language from instead of just one. Children who learn sign language are also thought to gain psychological benefits, such as improved confidence and self-esteem. Having the ability to sign could be a lifesaver when a child is too flustered to speak clearly.

This month other popular lessons have been ‘The Oceans: Atlantic, Pacific, Artic, Southern and Indian Ocean’, ‘Bubble making’, 'Matryoshka dolls' or Russian nesting dolls, and the ‘Flags of the world’.

Finally, just a quick reminder that our biggest fundraiser ‘The Big Night Out’ is this Saturday, May 4th at the Winnetu Hotel in Katama from 7 to 10. I hope to see everyone there! It is a very fun event planned with hard work from the families and staff at our school.
Late Day  
- Miss Weezie

I am writing this on a beautiful spring morning that makes me smile with the promise of the happy days ahead. It also allows me to reflect on past seasons and the tremendous growth of our V.M.S. students. In addition to their physical growth, when assessing the whole child, we look at five developmental areas. These include: cognitive, fine motor, gross motor, social and emotional. These areas do not necessarily develop evenly, however reflecting on our year since September, we see great overall progress in each student.

We have been so fortunate to have the addition of Miss Felicia to our Afternoon and Late Day staff. She brings her warmth, enthusiasm and professional expertise. She is a joy and the children immediately welcomed her into their days.

Some of our activities this month included singing and acting out the song "There Were Ten on the Bed". Children had fun counting backwards and "rolling off" one at a time. We talked about the many signs of spring and made our own pussy willows and forsythia, in addition to learning new songs with a seasonal theme. Books we read this month included: "My Spring Robin," "Welcome Spring" and "Mama Built a Nest".

We are grateful for the addition of new sand for our sandbox (thank you Landscope!). Outdoor play is nourishing for body and soul, however, a word of caution: tick season is upon us, so be sure to check your child (and yourself) frequently.
Recommended Reading
"At Home with Montessori" by Patricia Oriti (available in the VMS office!)

Book Corner for Parents
"Robot-Proof: Higher Education in the Age of Artificial Intelligence" by Joseph Aoun

"Yardsticks: Children in the Classroom Ages 4-14" by Chip Wood

"The Six Stages of Parenthood" by Ellen Galinsky

Book Corner for Children
"What Do You Do With An Idea?" by Kobi Yamada

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An independent school serving PreK through Grade 8.
Fostering a lifetime love of learning.

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