"We do no great things, only small things with great love."

-Mother Teresa

12 Weeks till Summer Camp!

Visit our website

Summer Camp registration is now 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.

Thank you to all the families who "dined to donate" last week! The food was delicious and with your help, our school raised money to fund extracurricular events, field trips and scholarships. A big THANK YOU to Drew's parents, Stephen and Susan Bowen for their generosity and for hosting us at their lovely restaurant.

Welcome!

We're thrilled to announce that Felicia Williams-Hart is joining the VMS teaching staff! Felicia will be working closely with all the teachers as a teacher assistant. She will be a welcome addition from 11 a.m. - 4:00 p.m. Monday through Friday.

Felicia grew up on Martha's Vineyard and attended Bridgewater State College for Business Management. Recently, after having two children of
her own, she decided it was time to do what she always wanted to do and become a teacher. Felicia says, "I love working with young children and exploring the world from their point of view. My daughter just turned three and my son will be one next month." Felicia began taking Early Childhood courses receiving her teacher certificate. She continues to take Early Childhood courses pursuing her EEC Lead Teacher certificate.

April Calendar

**POTLUCK**

Next Thursday, April 4th
5:30 - 7:00 PM

PreK through Grade 8 families are invited to an all-school community potluck dinner!

You requested it and we love the idea! Bring a dish to share, no sign-up necessary. All are welcome!

**Monday, April 1:** Girl Scout Cookies for sale in the VMS parking lot (2:30-3:00 PM) See Elementary students Gracie and Carly for some goodies!

**Wednesday, April 3:** Big Night Out Meeting (2:30-3:00 PM) Childcare will be available, please join us - only one month to go!

**Saturday, April 6:** Sing into Spring! Join Little Bird Music at VMS for a morning of songs and music for toddlers and preschoolers. Open to the public, space is limited. [Click here to RSVP!]

**April 15-19:** Spring Recess - No School
Saturday, April 27: Family Yard Day (9-12) Bring the kids for our fun bi-annual community clean-up of the main campus!

Looking Ahead to May

Saturday, May 4: The Big Night Out (7-10 PM) Book your sitters!
Monday, May 6 - Friday, May 10: Teacher Appreciation Week
Saturday, May 7: Sing Into Spring (9:30 - 10:30 AM)
Monday, May 27: Memorial Day, No School

Want school reminders right in your Facebook notifications? Join the private Facebook group for current VMS families, VMS Family Association.

VMS Family Association (VMSFA) Presents

BIG NIGHT OUT
SAT., May 4th 7-10 PM
Winnetu Resort

Wednesday, April 3: Big Night Out Planning Meeting (2:30-3:00 PM) All hands on deck! Childcare will be available, please join us!

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 Vineshakers perform and there's an incredible silent auction. Seeing as it's in the running for the Best of the Vineyard's Best Off-Season Event and Best Charity Event, it might be an understatement to say it's a REALLY fun night out for VMS parents, family and friends, and our larger Island community!

How you can help:

• INDIVIDUAL OR BUSINESS SPONSORS NEEDED Sponsors cover the costs of the food, band, etc. so that all the money we raise from the silent auction goes directly to benefiting the children. Click here for a
Sponsor/Donor Form

- **SILENT AUCTION DONATIONS NEEDED** See the list in the hallway or come up with your own unique ideas! [Click here for a Sponsor/Donor Form](#).

- **VOLUNTEER FOR AN HOUR** You'll still have plenty of time for dancing and bidding! Stop in the office or [email us to sign up](#).

- **TICKETS:** Each family will receive 4 tickets to sell. Buy them for yourself or sell them to friends, family and co-workers. Last year was a sold-out event! *Tickets will be sent home on Monday, April 22nd.*

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**Middle School**  
*Miss Ty*

During these past months the Middle School finished up the study of the American Civil War, from its roots in slavery and economic structure to the bloody battlefields of 1861 to 1865. We also read *Bull Run* by Paul Fleischman and *To Kill A Mockingbird* by Harper Lee, with individual projects for each novel when finished.

Dr. Montessori described the study of history, geography and literature at this age as the study of society. Included in this area are literature, geographical explorations, the relations of humans to the environment and each other, war, patriotism, and government.

The humanities curriculum strives to go beyond the history textbook toward an experiential approach including handwork, seminars, and outings into the community. Matthew created a long and detailed timeline of America from the 1840's to Lincoln’s assassination in 1865.

The students in Upper Elementary presented their history projects at the end of a study on the Renaissance, and Matthew presented his timeline at the same time, before everyone’s trip to the Montessori Model United Nations in New York City. Read all about the MMUN trip below [and click here to read the MV Times interview with the students](#).
March was an exciting month for the Elementary Students. Tim of Island Grown took some of the students out to our garden plot at Thimble Farm and separated beds with wood chips to prepare them for planting this spring. They also started some nightshade and radish seeds. The following week, students broke off into two groups to prepare for a cooking challenge similar to the show "Chopped". One group chose Japan and the other India, and they choose a common food from their country, while being limited to only 8 ingredients. One group will be making sushi and the other spicy Indian Bombay potatoes with chilies. Next week, each group will have 45 minutes to prepare their dish and then it will be judging time! They will be judged on presentation,
Upper Elementary presented their Renaissance projects to parents and other family members in lieu of a parents visiting day. They dressed as their chosen person and gave an autobiographical speech followed by presenting information about that person. Our room was graced by Joan of Arc (Carly), Queen Elizabeth (Gracie), Mary Queen of Scots (Marysol), Catherine De Medici (Nina), Shakespeare (Arin), and Vasco da Gama (Declan). Matthew presented his detailed timeline of the Civil War.

Pam Benjamin has been teaching the kids how to work with clay making pinch pots and other figures. While some of the students were in New York City, Declan had a chance to work on the potter’s wheel and made a bowl. He was joined by Addison from Miss Nora’s class who worked with him on the African flags. For our poetry unit, the focus last week was alliteration and acrostic poems. Below is Declan’s alliteration poem.

Dinosaur With A Hump
By Declan Diriwachter

Declan dug a dungeon
It was deep and dark and damp
During December in Dakar
With a diagram of a camp

Dracula also dug
During a disaster in the dump
He found a dinosaur
With a disastrous hump

Matthew, Marysol, Arin, Carly and Gracie worked hard in NYC at the MMUN conference. We are so proud that all five of them were chosen by their conference peers to speak on behalf of their groups at the United Nations, announcing the passing of their resolutions! Topics our kids worked on were:

- Prohibition of the dumping of radioactive wastes
- International Cooperation in the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space
- The Risk of Nuclear Proliferation in the Middle East
- Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples

Don’t miss this great article in the MV Times interviewing the students about their trip!

And last but not least, congratulations to Declan, Gracie and Carly for their stellar performance in the All Island String Orchestra performance this week!
Elementary I Classroom
- Miss Nora

This month River returned! We were all very happy to have our classmate back at school, and enjoyed hearing him share his experiences in Costa Rica with us.

March was also the beginning of skating at the MV Ice Arena. Beth is a fantastic teacher and former Ice Capade. The students once again get one-on-one lessons due to our smaller class size. Balance and depth perception play a major role in the development of gross motor skills. Ice skating is a great way to gain that experience. It is very challenging and requires the child to break out of his/her comfort zone. This is a skill that is not immediately mastered. However, weekly improvements build their confidence, giving them a sense of mental and physical accomplishment. It is really fun to see them out there on the ice working hard to balance, moving and conquering their fear to stay up and get back up when they fall. That is persistence, a life-long lesson in the making.

The students are gearing up to get back outside and work in the garden with Tim from Island Grown Schools. We’ve been planting seeds weekly and starting the germination process. The lemon trees are showing steady progress. We are anxiously waiting for Tim to bring the seeds we started this
winter back to get them in the ground. We have a weekly schedule we are going to start to follow for our planting. We are all wishing and hoping the warm weather continues after the long, cold winter. We have started a basic overview of the history of Timekeeping and reviewing the clock, and we continue art each week with Miss Pam and are patiently waiting for the finished clay pieces and bowls we have been working on.

Primary 2 Classroom
- Miss Chris and Miss Carrie

It seemed as if spring would never get here but hopefully we have turned the corner weather-wise and the children will have more opportunities to be outside, whether it be playing, gardening or going for nature walks. During the past few indoor gardening sessions, Ava has been working on a unit on seeds. The children had the chance to sort
different types of seeds and match them to what their plant would look like. They made live seed necklaces that should sprout from the warmth of the children's bodies as they wear them. We have four different types of seeds sprouting on our window and we are observing which seeds grow the quickest. The children made seed tape which has seeds glued to a piece of newspaper which will be planted in our gardens as soon as the weather improves. Our small outdoor garden beds could use some sprucing up as the raised wooden structures have come apart a bit. We also would love a small fence that would surround the garden area so that the plants do not get trampled during recess time. If anyone is willing to help, please let me know. In addition, we would love to hatch chicks this year but are in need of an incubator (see our Amazon Wish List).

The older children have been going to the MV Arena for ice skating lessons while the younger students remain at school creating a delicious snack for us upon our return from skating. So far the children have made strawberry banana smoothies, pizza English muffins and cinnamon roll ups! The skaters have been learning how to fall down and get back up on dry land (always a great starting point), falling and getting back up on the ice (a little more challenging) and marching on the ice while making the letter "T" with their bodies. Already I can see the increase in self-confidence and pride in just two weeks. Thank you to all the parents that have helped chaperone the trips to the rink.

In the Montessori curriculum, many lesson presentations have what we call variations and extensions. A variation of a lesson doesn't change the degree of difficulty of the material, it just adds a different element such as changing spoon types for a Practical Life lesson or changing the color of the paint at the easel. An extension of a lesson will add a higher degree of difficulty such as adding a blindfold or creating your own lesson such as the Brown Stair or Pink Tower out of paper by drawing it and cutting it out. Many children are discovering new ways to work with familiar lessons. These ideas usually come from the child's own creativity and can be implemented during their work period. I really enjoy observing the children work with the materials in new and exciting ways.
Primary 1 Classroom  
- Miss Cristina and Miss Rebecca

Happy first week of Spring! Our class cannot wait to have warmer, sunnier days. We love and miss working outdoors and walking to the beach.

Special Visitor Day was very well attended! It is one of my favorite days of the year. I love watching what each child chooses to show to his/her special visitor. The children are so proud of their work and excited to share with their friends and/or family. As the children spend so much of their time here at school, it is great to have you observe them. Thank you all for coming and making this a special day for them.

This month was a busy one. The older students in our classroom started ice skating classes on Tuesdays. The children had a great time practicing at the rink. Their first lesson was learning how to get up from the ice when they fall, which is very often for first-time skaters! This lesson is done on the rubber mats outside the rink and then the students get to practice on the ice. The children seemed more confident and eager to be on their own on the ice after the first class. It looked like so much fun, and everyone really enjoyed themselves. I want to thank our volunteers for driving and for helping to set up the car seats and tying the skates for the students. We could not do this without you!

While the older students are skating, the younger ones bake with Miss Rebecca at the school. When we return, the entire building smells like a bakery and we all get to enjoy the goodies in a group snack.

On Wednesdays Miss Joyce is back in our classroom bringing many different
songs and playing and passing around her instruments. On Thursdays, Miss Ava from Island Grown visits to teach us about seeds. And Fridays we have Miss Claire from The Yard. She always brings fun and creative ideas to encourage the children to dance and move.

This month there were a few popular lessons; new ones along with many old ones. The 'land and water forms' is a new lesson. In Montessori education, land and water forms typically include island and lake, peninsula and gulf, cape and bay, the system of lakes and archipelago, and isthmus and strait. There are pre-formed shapes that can be chosen and then explored with water, plastic forms, and a tiny boat. Other popular lessons are soap grating, painting with water colors, map making, reading drawers, and making books with the words. There is still much to learn in these next few months of the school year.
Late Day
- Miss Weezie

Students and teachers are excited to welcome the arrival of Spring this month. Although the air is still chilly, the sun is warm and crocuses are popping up. Children have observed these changes in nature with excitement as well as caution in treating these blossoms with care.

The afternoon students have worked on activities to improve dexterity, hand strength and fine motor skills. These are all necessary for pre-writing development. We have practiced hole punching, lacing and scrunching small bits of tissue paper to decorate shamrocks. We sang a shamrock song to accompany these lessons. Our tin foil robots also have a finger play about "Five Little Robots Standing in a Row".

Late Day continues to include a variety of quality children's literature with movement and dramatic play used as a "story stretcher". We recently pretended to be dinosaurs roaming the jungle, having read several books on dinosaurs. Each student chose his or her favorite prehistoric creature to act out and participate. We enjoy adding imaginary play to our school experience.
Thank you to our Big Night Out Sponsors!

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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.
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