"Education today, in this particular social period, is assuming truly unlimited importance. And the increased emphasis on its practical value can be summed up in one sentence: education is the best weapon for peace." Maria Montessori

Erin Tilton Joins VMS' Administrative Team

My name is Erin Tilton and I was born and raised in Maine. After graduating from Wheaton College in Norton, MA with a major in American History and two minors in Sociology and Family Studies, I came to the Vineyard as a "summer girl" where I met my husband, Zeb. Together we have three young children: Wyatt (8), Hollis (5) and Maisie (1 ½) – every day is an adventure with our busy family of five!

After 16 years of building a strong foundation in fundraising and community relations in the Development Office at Martha's Vineyard Hospital, I am beyond excited to be joining the Vineyard Montessori School's administrative team. My professional and personal philosophy is pretty simple: work hard at doing your best, pay attention to the details – they matter, support others whenever possible and always keep a great sense of humor!

I am thrilled to be starting this new chapter with the talented staff and amazing families of VMS. I am looking forward to being immersed in the Montessori environment where students and faculty alike think critically, work collaboratively and grow creatively.

VMS Completes Purchase of New Land
We are pleased to announce that this week Vineyard Montessori School completed the purchase of the land adjacent to our school. We are thrilled to share this news!

The purchase of this land has been in the planning process for some time and presents many opportunities for our school. The main goals are to create a beautiful campus that will meet the growing, independent education needs of the community, bring value to the neighborhood and complement the spirit of Vineyard Haven. Long-term plans include the renovation or replacement of the existing building, expanding the elementary classroom(s) and creating new dynamic outdoor learning and play environments.

We will keep you apprised of our plans as we move forward. In the near future, you will receive an invitation to attend a reception where we will discuss the campus plans and future of VMS in more detail. In the meantime, please contact Debbie Jernegan if you have any questions. She can be reached by email at headofschool@vineyardmontessori.com or phone at 508-693-4090.

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Chess Club

Brahmin Thurber, MVRHS Chess Captain is very interested in starting a new session of Chess Club in the afternoon. Please let Debbie Jernegan know if your child is interested in participating. We will then plan a day, based on the availability of all interested students.

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SAVE THE DATES

**Friday, March 17th**, Noon Dismissal for the Faculty Professional Day

**Friday, April 7th** at 10:00 a.m. all VMS students will be attending a performance by Andres 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, 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 Some of our Montessori students have been invited to
Mark your calendars for the “Big Night Out” on Saturday, May 6th at the Harborview Hotel in Edgartown. Many of you are asking, "How can I help?" You received an envelope with all the information necessary to get sponsors and donation items.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to ask. The BNO team is working together on creating an event you won’t want to miss!

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

Skating is over; thanks to our parent helpers who drove and tied skates! I know it is a lot of work for the half-hour lesson, but the children’s growth and learning during those four weeks were phenomenal. Again, a special thanks to Jenn Doyle, who organized all the drivers and was there each week. Holly Lawyer and either Vanessa or Roland Georges were also there each week, so a great thank you to them. Other volunteers included Julie Carvalho, Nevette Previd, Angie Francis, Emily Melnick and Guin Cramer. All these adults were so helpful with not only driving, but with tying skates and getting helmets on (and off!). You all ROCK!

Several children are continuing their wonderful work with the embroidery of shapes and then stitching the cloth into pillows. There are so many wonderful creations in progress now. These exercises in “advanced practical life” attract the older students who may have outgrown the simpler pouring or spooning, but these activities also inspire our younger students whose hand/eye coordination and small motor control are being refined.

All year, we have studied the animal kingdom. We began with Vertebrate/Invertebrate and focused on whether an animal has a backbone, like us! Then we began the five classes of vertebrates. So far, we have thought about fish, amphibians (frogs) and reptiles (turtles). Now we have begun the study of the bird, the fourth class of vertebrates. There is a puzzle and thenomenclature cards with the parts of the bird which can be made into a booklet.

Here is a quote from Montessori: "What is a scientist? We give the name scientist to the type of person who has felt experiment to be a means guiding him to search out the deep truth of life, to lift a veil from its
fascinating secrets, and who, in this pursuit, has felt arising within him a love for themysteries of nature, so passionate as to annihilate the thought of himself.”

“A love for the mysteries of nature.” Wow. That’s what I’m talking about.

Primary 2 Classroom
- Miss Chris and Miss Holly

There has been much cooperation and collaboration happening within the class this week. Many children are getting together to choose, plan and implement complex activities. Working with one or two partners takes a great deal of patience, strategic planning, cooperation and problem-solving skills. The children have been combining lessons to create new challenges to the lessons they have already mastered. They are enjoying seeing the final outcome of their hard work. Their social skills have greatly improved and are being put into play each day.

This week was our final day of skating and baking. The children have enjoyed these programs and will be sad to see them end. This week, the children baked blueberry muffins to share with the class. It is always such a joy to return to school to the delicious smells of baked goods.

Some children have taken on some of the responsibilities for caring for our classroom. One of the favorite activities is dusting. The children use child-sized chamois cloths and remove each lesson, one by one, and carefully dust off the tray and the space on the shelf. Cleaning the puzzle maps can be quite challenging as many of the smallest pieces pop out while trying to clean off the dust. So, not only do the children need to practice their fine motor skills, they also have to remember where the map piece belongs in order to return the puzzle in its completed state.
Classroom
- Miss Irene and Miss Nora

The Elementary I students returned from the Montessori Model United Nations (MMUN) in NYC on Monday. Below are some thoughts from interviews of the MMUN students.

Marysol Jurczyk was new to MMUN this year and her topic was nuclear disarmament. Students spent six hours daily for the first three days in class. Marysol said, “It was really fun. Our bureau, the secretariat and chair were really nice and were not strict. They gave us pointers on speaking and how to behave and be respectful in class. During formal consultations, we talked about each other’s speeches and how to put them into resolutions. At that time, we also voted on the length of informal consultations when we met with other delegations.”

Another first-timer was Daniel Carreno. He explained the informal consultations. “The informal consultations were fun, and I met a lot of kids from other countries. The purpose was to walk around the room and make a resolution with other countries. We asked people if they wanted to join us, and we shared ideas. My topic was the Prevention of an Arms Race in Outer Space. One of the solutions that I learned about and put in the resolution was to make sure that people check any objects before they are sent to space. They would make sure that there are no arms on board.”

This was Silas Stanek’s second year, and he was chosen to speak at the UN. He said, “After the resolution was written for PAROS, the bureau asked all the people who wanted to speak at the UN General Assembly to go to the corner of the room to decide among fellow delegates. Three people would be chosen per topic. Twelve kids wanted to speak on the topic and nine voted for me. I think they chose me because when I was in the blocs, I was helping a lot and I let everyone share their ideas.” When I asked him if he was nervous, he said, “To be honest, I was more nervous about my opening speech in the conference than I was at the UN. The first year I was in space, and this year I had gravity!”

Elementary I students finished up with the Timeline of Life this week and are moving on to the five animal kingdoms. They also presented their beautiful presidential presentations, which included Teddy Roosevelt, FDR, Harry Truman and Benjamin Harrison. Some of the kindergarten students came to visit to watch the presentations, along with a young man named Ben Sanders who will be in our Elementary II class in the fall. Students presented professionally and answered several questions about their presidents.
Late Day
- Miss Weezie and Miss Cristina

The stormy weather on Tuesday provided ample time to engage the students in puppetry. This week, I chose "The Gingerbread Man", which has enough characters for each student to act as a puppeteer. The language arts experiences include correct grammar, fluency, tone and listening skills. Student puppet shows promote working together in groups.

There will not be Yogamotion this week with Miss Anne, but we will continue to practice some of our yoga breathing, poses and techniques. She will return next week for Yoga. The last Yogamotion class is March 29th.
A favorite library book this week was "FairyHouses" by Tracy Kane. This beautifully illustrated book captured the attention and imagination of all the students.

There will be no Late Day this Friday due to a noondismissal for the Faculty Professional Day.

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**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

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**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

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**Book Corner for Children**

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

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**Vineyard Montessori School**

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An independent non-profit school

Pre-k through sixth grade.

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