"Nothing without joy"

- Loris Malaguzzi

**Calendar**

**Thursday, December 21st:** Winter Gathering 1:30 p.m. - 2:30 p.m.

**Friday, December 22nd - Monday, January 1st:** School Closed

**Tuesday, January 2nd:** School Reopens

**Thursday, January 18th:** Dine to Donate at Offshore Ale Company

**Primary 1 Classroom**

-Miss Cristina and Miss Rebecca-

During Practical Life lessons, the children learn to be careful and orderly in their work. The whole lesson from beginning to end includes cleaning up and leaving the exercise "ready for the next child".

It is at this time I will introduce more complicated exercises such as carrot
cutting. Trusting children with real tools is a huge hurdle for many, so we follow the child’s pace and provide child-sized real tools. The child washes his or her hands, chooses a carrot from the supply shelf, and then begins the work. The tasks of putting on an apron, scrubbing the carrot, using the peeler, and then chopping the slices into bite-sized pieces take quite a long time. Then, the children learn to be gracious by offering the prepared carrots to others. We direct the children to ask, “Would you like some carrot?” The other child either says, “Yes, please” or “No, thank you.” If the other child says, “Yes, please” and accepts the snack, he should say, “Thank you.” The child who has prepared the carrot plate says, “You’re welcome.” Lots of words to remember! And then, of course, there is the clean-up. This exercise involves taking all the implements to the sink and washing them, drying them, and replacing them on the table. Rolling the apron, drying off spills on the table, folding the towel.... there are many skills learned and practiced in this one lesson! These skills include concentration, order, completion of task, and independence. The children are very drawn to this lesson and enjoy walking to each friend and offering them a carrot.

Primary 2 Classroom
-Miss Chris and Miss Holly

Our classroom has been very busy this week with each child working on his/her own choices of lessons. Some of the older children have been working on more advanced math activities, such as four-digit addition, some have been working toward recognizing numerals 1-100, and some have been introduced to multiplication. Seeing these older children progress through each area of the classroom reminds me that all children develop at different rates, and the Montessori Method gives each child that wonderful opportunity to move forward when he/she is ready. A child is much more receptive to the concept that a lesson shows when they are developmentally ready. When children fully understand the idea that the lesson is showing them, only then are they ready to move forward, ready for new lessons. Nothing is more satisfying than to see that "Aha" moment when a child masters a lesson.
Two of our kindergarten students had the opportunity to join Miss Nora's lower elementary class for a group lesson this week. The bridge between the two levels is an exciting chance for the kindergarten students to have a peek of what it is like to be with the next level of students. They really enjoyed their visit!

I would like to remind all parents that the children should be bringing a hat, mittens/gloves, and a warm jacket to school now that the weather is turning quite cold. We do try to go outside every day, and it is important that your child be warm and comfortable in this colder weather. Trying to get ready to go outside with all these new layers can be challenging for some children. You can help by practicing at home how to put on mittens/gloves and how to hold the sleeves of a shirt while putting on a jacket. Our saying for getting ready to go outside is, "Shoes, jackets, hats, then gloves". We need our hands to put everything on so they cannot be covered by gloves until the end. Practicing at home can help alleviate some frustration when getting ready and also lead your child to becoming more independent. Please remember to label all outerwear so that mittens and gloves do not get misplaced.

Elementary I Classroom
- Miss Nora

Elementary I students had a fantastic field trip to The Whaling Museum. They were able to see the skeleton of a baby blue whale (four- or five-years old) that is still dripping oil! It is expected to drip for another 70 years! Blue whales can live up to 100 years. We also saw the skeleton of a sperm whale. They were one of the most precious whales to catch. The students were able to see the difference in the purity of oil from different whales. Sperm oil is clear and burns clean with no smell. NASA used sperm whale oil on the Hubble telescope because it does not freeze. The New Bedford Whaling Museum is home to the largest model ship in the US.
The ship was commissioned by the daughter of a whaling captain. It was her father’s favorite boat that he sailed on for many years. She was instrumental in creating the museum. The model is so big they had to build the room over the model so it would fit properly.

The students are continuing their study of the animal kingdom with the internal parts of the five types of vertebrates in the Chordata Family: fish, amphibians, reptiles, birds, and mammals. We talked about circulation, movement, protection, respiration, and reproduction.

Please do not forget our holiday celebration on Thursday at 1:30 pm. Dismissal will immediately follow. NO SCHOOL FRIDAY.

Elementary II Classroom

-Gracie Coggins

We started to prepare for our winter gathering last week with test cooking our foods from our MMUN countries. We cut the class in half and two groups cooked in each classroom during Friday morning. Some of the recipes turned out ok and others didn't do so well, but now we will fix our mistakes that we made just in time for our parents to come. Some of us made display boards and wrote information about the different countries’ winter celebrations and traditions.

Mary Sage, the gardener, brought in a big composting bin for us to use. We started to put things in it, such as eggshells, salad, pumpkins, dirt, leaves, and wood chips. She told us that whenever we put in food scraps, we should put in
an equal amount of brown stuff, which is woodchips, leaves, and dirt. Every time you put something in, you should turn the composter. Things you should not put in are dairy, meat, fish, citrus, and onion peels. Meat and fish will cause maggots to grow, and citrus and onions kill worms and other helpful microorganisms.

We started the Africa portion of the Timeline of Ancient Civilizations. To learn more about life in Egypt, we are reading "The Golden Goblet". So far, this book is about a boy who wants to be a master goldsmith like his dad who died. Now he lives with his half-brother who is abusive and is holding him back from becoming a goldsmith. The boy finds out that someone is stealing gold from his boss, and he thinks that it is his half-brother. We started to draw the main characters and wrote about their personalities. We also wrote out words and definitions for some of the words that we didn't understand.

Peace, love and unicorns!

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**Middle School**

- Miss Ty

Matthew finished the study of Ancient Rome after examining the “Fall of the Roman Empire” and then Rome as the “Roots of Western Civilization”. We discussed how Rome used and adapted a lot of what Greece had developed but also created a style of their own. Sculpture and other Roman fine arts flourished, along with philosophy and literature. Latin, the language of Rome, was the foundation for many modern languages, like Spanish and Italian. Architecture and engineering were especially prominent, including the Arch, the Dome, and concrete. Lastly, Rome’s system of laws created an enduring influence on the western world.

After the storm of last month, we had several trees down on the Greenwood Campus of VMS. As I reported in past newsletters, workers came to clean up the damage, providing interesting learning and entertainment for all the children. One of the things they did for us is saw a particularly large tree into 12 stumps that the students have arranged in a “stump circle”. This circle will be used to have occasional morning meetings, gatherings, or even lessons. Each student will carve a design on his or her own stump. Carving has begun!
In geography, we have been studying maps extensively this semester. Now at the end of our study, Matthew showed his prowess in maps by drawing a neighborhood map of his house, Vineyard Montessori School, and all the way to our classroom at the Greenwood Campus in an exercise of mental mapping.

One special thing that happened this week was that Marysol made a little holiday hat for Blossom, our pet guinea pig. Here is a picture of her looking especially festive!

The Late Day Program  
- Ms. Weezie

By the time you read this newsletter, we may have replaced our rakes with snow shovels. However, I did purchase additional rakes for our playground recently as children love doing "real work", like raking leaves into a pile. Naturally, the next step is jumping into the pile or going down the slide into a leaf pile. This is a great co-operative effort and always fun!

We will complete this season's art classes on Monday, December 18th. This has been another successful creative experience for our students under the direction of Pam Benjamin. Works of art will be available to take home following the Spring Art Show where they will be on display.

One of our favorite books this week was "The Boy and the Whale". The illustrations were vivid, and the text captured the students' attention followed by some interesting discussion. A young boy chooses to try to save a whale caught in a net off shore while his father has given him strict warning against doing so.

Please remember appropriate outdoor clothing from now on, and try to take some family "time out" to read together during this busy season.
Recommended Reading
"There's No Such Thing as the Real World" by Peter Piche in MontessoriParent
Read article here.

Book Corner for Parents
"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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Fostering a lifetime love of learning, one child at a time.