VMS Weekly News - December 8, 2017

"Nature is the best playground."
- unknown

Calendar

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

These past few weeks, there has been an explosion of geography work being done in the classroom. Geography is an important part of the Montessori cultural curriculum.
and is an area of fascination for children as they learn about where they live and where other people live.

Just like all the other curriculum areas, we have geography materials available at all times in the classroom; items like the globes and the world continent map have been there since the beginning of school. I have just introduced another map, North America, which several children are already exploring.

We started the study of our earth by introducing the idea that it is made up of land, water, and air. Also, we have folders and cards of many images and artifacts that represent different parts of the world. It is wonderful seeing children pouring over these photographs, wondering what the people are doing or where the animals live.

Primary 2 Classroom
-Miss Chris and Miss Holly

Each and every morning, our day begins with us gathered together on the rug. Being together as a classroom community allows for the opportunity to share; sharing lessons, sharing songs and poems, and most importantly, sharing thoughts and feelings. Some mornings, I share a lesson with the children. This week, I gave a lesson on hibernation, migration, and adaptation. After the lesson was over, I taught the children a poem about winter animals. As we head into the winter season, some of the conversations in class have been revolving around animals during the wintertime. Often times, children ask, "What do animals eat in the winter when there are no leaves or berries anymore?" or "Why don't animals have a house so they can keep warm?" We will be starting a unit on how animals survive the climate changes and have already introduced the idea of hibernation, migration, and adaptation. We will also be focusing on birds by identifying different local species and how we can help them throughout the upcoming winter season.

The magnetic activities are still very popular in our class. The children have been using their creativity to make different patterns and shapes with the magnetic
marbles and rods. They try to see how many magnetic discs they can pick up at one time with a bar magnet. The children are challenging themselves by trying to put together a magnetic cube. The children are very excited when they finally are able to complete the cube. The children painted some pots with Miss Ava so that they are able to transfer their seedlings from last week into the pots. The children will be able to bring them home in a few weeks.

If there is anyone that is interested in taking Nutmeg, our class guinea pig, home for the winter break, please let me know. Thank you!

**Elementary I Classroom**

- **Miss Nora**

Elementary I students have had an exciting week. We finished the Timeline of Life, one of the Montessori Great Lessons. This is another impressionist lesson that illustrates the evolution of life from the Paleozoic Era to our current Cenozoic Era.

We then moved onto the Five Kingdoms of Life, starting with the Monera Kingdom. Monera, organisms that are made up of one cell, are the oldest kinds of life on earth. Bacteria and viruses are monera. The Protista Kingdom includes organisms made up of one cell also. But they are more complicated because they have a nucleus and other moving parts. They live in wet places. Next came the Fungi Kingdom. Fungi have many cells and absorb their food from the things they grow on. The students learned about The Plant Kingdom next. All plants are part of this kingdom. They can make their own food and usually do not move around. They have many cells. Finally came the Animal Kingdom. Animals need to search for food. Some animals are very simple and some are very complicated. We have expanded our lesson to put the animals in order since it is important to organize living things. The children learned the levels: kingdom, phylum, and class.

One of the most enjoyable activities we did this week was make beet hummus with Mary-Sage. We wanted to finish up our fall session with a root vegetable treat. It was delicious! Keep an eye out for the recipe. It is heading home.
Greetings from the Greenwood Campus! This is Marysol Jurczyk here!

On Monday, we continued our whale studies at M.V. Museum with Ann. We started off looking and touching some real whale teeth and baleen. I was surprised how heavy the teeth were. She also had some samples of scrimshaw that weren't real. Then we went on a scavenger hunt with partners to look for some real whaling supplies and tools that were on a whaling ship. Next, we went upstairs where the staff works and where they keep all of their artifacts in a dimly lit room. Here, we found some really old whale oil. There were around eight bottles of oil of different colors that were placed down under a light so that we could see them. You cannot keep them under a light for long or it will damage the oil. I think that we all felt special that we got to go up into the staff area.

Tuesday, we got to go ice skating for the first time this year. We will have eight weeks of skating. This is the first time that I saw the new rink. It felt bigger. I had a lot of fun just skating around with my friends.

That same day, there were these tree cutters who were cutting down rotten trees near our building. Mark left us some cut-up logs that we could use as chairs outside!

Thank you for reading my news. I will be writing again soon!
Middle School
- Miss Ty

*Into Thin Air*, by Jon Krakauer, is the new book that we are reading in the Middle School. This non-fiction novel is Krakauer’s third, and it follows the tragic events of May 1996 on the slopes of Mt. Everest. A quickly formed storm trapped many of Krakauer’s teammates high on the summit during that fateful trip. While he survived, eight other climbers succumbed to the elements. During this novel-study, we will identify the motivation behind the climbers that keeps them going despite their suffering. We will also consider the role of perseverance and determine whether it ultimately hurts any of the climbers.

During our study of the Ancient Roman Civilization, we segued off into two sessions of studying some of the world’s religions, since they are a major source of inspiration, meaning, and controversy in human culture. Religions influence history, politics, economics, art, and literature. Matthew made a chart of his notes, covering Christianity, Buddhism, Hinduism, Judaism, Taoism, and Islam.

The Middle School continues to enjoy the wonderful work at the M.V. Museum. This week, we got the extra-special “treat” of going upstairs into the inner offices of the museum. We got to see several graded samples of whale oil that have been saved since the turn of the 20th century. The beautiful amber color of the vials are not seen by the general viewing public, and we appreciated the honor of seeing them.
**The Late Day Program**  
*Ms. Weezie*

Our last art class will be postponed until December 18th as Pam will be away on Monday, December 11th. The students embellished and completed their mosaics this week. The results are amazing, and Pam and I were impressed with the focus and patience the students gave this work.

We have been asked once again by Jane Chandler, one of the merchants on Main Street in Vineyard Haven, to contribute to their holiday window display. Children were asked to draw something for which they are thankful. We have been creating these unique drawings throughout the week, so please be watching for them in shop windows.

We continue to enjoy quality children’s literature, and the students are becoming attentive listeners. One favorite book this week was *Banjo and Ruby Red*, a charming animal story.

I wish that I could capture the joy in the body language and faces of the children playing in leaf piles on our playground this week. This is certainly a fond childhood memory for so many of us.

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**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

Vineyard Montessori School
286 Main St, Vineyard Haven, MA 02568
vineyardmontessori.com
(508) 693-4090

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Fostering a lifetime love of learning, one child at a time.