"No act of kindness no matter how small is ever wasted."
-Aesop

Calendar

Thursday, 2:30 pm - 3:30 pm: The Elementary and Middle School students are invited to the Elementary I classroom to play chess, dominos, bingo, and other games from 2:30 pm - 4:00 pm.

Saturday, January 27th 10:00 am - 11:30 am: Open House -- Current parents, friends of current parents, and students are invited for a fun morning in our classrooms.

Share Our Open House on Social Media

Let's come together as a community to help promote our love for learning in the community. We encourage you to like our Facebook page and share our admissions open
Island String Concert

Congratulations to Carly and Grace Coggins on their outstanding participation in the Island String Concert.

Tisbury Police and EMS Visit the Primary Classrooms

Thank you so much to Officer Max Sherman for organizing the weekly visits from the town of Tisbury's emergency response community. Today at VMS, Paramedic Kyle Gatchell, EMT Gleyzielle Rodrigues, and Danielle Shea came to our classrooms to introduce themselves to the children. They shared what they do, why they are dressed the way they are, and they introduced the students to the equipment they use. The children also had the opportunity to tour the ambulance.
Last week, we had a visit from Vineyard Haven Police Department. Officer Max and Officer Maria talked about safety and how their job is to find evidence to solve crimes. They explained how they even had to find the solution of one artificial and funny case. They also explained the parts of their uniforms and showed the children the equipment they have to use. The children were able to explore a police car and listen to the sirens. This week we welcomed the EMS from Vineyard Haven to visit our school. The children were able to explore the ambulance.

This week, the children were very busy working with the different materials in the classroom. I am excited to say that a few students are beginning to read and write. They get to read a word by repeating the sound of the letters. The excitement in their faces is priceless! They feel so proud of themselves and keep asking me to give them more reading and writing work.

A new puzzle has made the way onto our geography shelf. It is a large, round, abstract map of the world surrounded by flags of the nations. This puzzle has a control and can be constructed by carefully matching the flags to their countries; they students enjoy finding out where each one goes. Puzzles provide opportunities for developing fine motor skills, which are required with the small, specialized movements of locating and placing the pieces. These skills are necessary for handwriting and other important achievements. Other benefits of puzzles are problem solving, planning, shape recognition, and memory enhancement.

I always enjoy this time in the school year when so many of the lessons that were introduced in the beginning of the year have now taken on a different meaning for some children. While some children were only able to complete one or two rows of the
Hundred Board, they are now quickly and easily finishing it all the way to the end. Those children that were just recognizing letter sounds are now blending two and three sounds together. Many of the children are moving from the concrete to the abstract by adding writing enrichment activities to their lessons. As delighted as I am to see the growth in the children's development, the real delight is observing a child when he/she completes a lesson independently that he/she has been working towards all year. It is that "ah ha" moment when everything clicks and the joy of mastery sinks in.

In a Montessori primary classroom, often times you may find children cleaning the environment. Part of the Practical Life curriculum is the care of the environment. Children are shown how to keep our classroom clean and organized. By participating in activities, such as watering the plants, dusting the shelves, and sweeping the floor, a child gains a sense of purpose and learns that the classroom belongs to each and every student. It creates a sense of community and respect for our environment. Children never feel that they are having to do chores; rather they are eager to help when given the correct tools (child-sized broom, dustpan, watering can, polish) when a need arises. Many of these activities can be carried over into the home. Children love to help sort and fold the laundry, count out the right number of forks and knives to set the table, and take care of any pets. These are all activities that allow the child to feel a sense of pride and belonging.
Elementary I Classroom
- Miss Nora

This week, the Elementary I students have been very busy covering many areas of the curriculum. They have been practicing and perfecting their lines and stage presence for their play, *Trouble with Trolls*. The play will be presented at 1:40 pm next Friday, February 2nd in the classroom.

The students have also been studying flags and countries around the world. Their research covers the countries’ flags, the meaning behind the symbols and colors of each flag, and the countries’ population, bordering countries, language, and other interesting facts. They are very motivated. Once a flag catches their eye, they want to know all about the country.

They continue their work on landforms, parts of a mountain, irregular coastlines, and a river and its parts. In math, they had a group lesson on hierarchal numbers and relationships. They were able to see the size ratio between 1 and 1,000,000,000 concretely with the Montessori math materials. And last but not least, they learned the life cycle of seeds. Mary-Sage brought in materials, and each student made a puzzle of the life cycle to bring home.

Elementary II Classroom
- Miss Irene

Researching flags of different countries
Learning and identifying the parts of a river
The Hierarchial materials
This week, the Upper Elementary class finished their book, *The Golden Goblet*. After our last literature circle, they worked in two groups to act out scenes in two of the chapters. The opposite team had to guess which chapter the scene was in, what was happening, and who the characters were. Upon completion, the students were already asking which book we were reading next, and they were requesting roles for jobs in our literature circle. Acting out these scenes is a way for children to process their interpretation of the reading, process their thoughts, and develop a whole range of social skills, creativity, and important critical-thinking and problem-solving skills.

The students also enjoyed the opportunity for some creative writing surrounding their upcoming projects within a whaling unit from M.V. Museum. Many photos of daily life on board a whaling vessel served as sentence starters from the perspective of the captains (students). These will be used as entries in their fictitious log books, which will be on display at the museum.

The students chose six of the many photos from which to write log or journal entries. One photo that Silas chose showed a man looking disappointed while holding his food. Silas wrote, "According to the first mate, Peter was yelling at Timmy for giving him hard tack for the 42nd straight day and only giving him brown beans for eight of those 42 days. They shall both be punished three percent of their lay at the next stop in San Juan, Puerto Rico!"

Carly wrote this after viewing a photo of a woman being transferred to another boat on a swing: "We spotted another boat yonder at sea. The 1st, 2nd, and 3rd mates tossed a lady, Mistress Elizabeth Ann, back aboard her ship at the strike of 9:00." The students are already taking on the personas of the captains who they will bring to life at their M.V. Museum showing this spring. Parents and the public will be welcome to meet the captains.

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**Middle School**

*Miss Ty*

This week, on January 23rd, in honor of
National Pie Day (not to be confused with National Pi Day on March 14th), Matthew and I baked two pies to share with the Upper Elementary class. He chose apple as the flavor and brought in an ingenious apple corer/peeler/cutter that automated a normally tedious job of preparing the fruit! Baking the pies was a wonderful community service project that was as good for us as it was for the other class!

There are several characteristics of this age of adolescents that are talked about in teacher training programs. Emotional characteristics include a time of developing self-awareness, uncertainty, emotional unevenness, and self-criticism. Students of this age need meaningful, real work and an opportunity to contribute to their communities.

Cognitively, this is a thinking and critical age, as the students are capable of mature thought if framed within a personal context. It is a very creative age. Cognitively, students of this age need opportunities to express creatively their new interests, thoughts, and emotions, to acquire flexible and inquiring habits of mind, and to develop a personal vision.

Social characteristics include a need for solidarity with peers, identity with race, gender, and ethnicity. Adolescents are critical of each other and of adults, they question rules and beliefs, and they strive to be as independent as possible. They need to build community and to build reliable and close relationships with peers and with at least one adult (besides their parents).

It is a time of tremendous physical growth, sexual maturation, and boundless energy. Besides plenty of physical activity, students of this age need a time for relaxation and contemplation.

Late Day
- Miss Weezie and Miss Cristina

This week, our Afternoon and Late Day students had the chance to create more "nature-inspired" projects. As we proceed with our reading and discussion of winter birds, we made bird feeders using pine cones covered with Crisco and then rolled in seeds. Some students chose to make pomander-scented balls using oranges and cloves. Both activities gave the students opportunities to smell, touch, and even taste the materials.

Literature this week focused on owls with some carefully chosen books on the topic. Books included Owl Moon, Good Night Owl, Backyard Birds of Winter, and Owl Sees Owl. Please note that on Wednesday, January 31st and Monday, March 12th, Felix Neck will be hosting family "owl prowls". These are held during the full moon early enough in the evening that they are suitable for families with young children. We are fortunate to have a wildlife center such as Felix Neck to
provide us with a nature-based community resource.

**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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*An independent non-profit school*  
*Pre-k through sixth grade.*

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