"Without a sense of caring, there can be no community."
—Anthony D'Angelo

Calendar

**Thursdays until April at 2:30 pm:** Elementary Game Day: All elementary students are welcome in the Elementary I classroom.

**Monday, February 19th:** President's Day -- School is closed.

**Wednesday, February 21st:** Dine-to-Donate -- Pizza di Napoli.

**February 26th - March 2nd:** Winter Recess -- School is closed.

**Monday, March 5th:** School reopens.
Officer Max and the Oak Bluffs Fire Department Visit VMS

Today at the Main Street campus, VMS welcomed Officer Max Sherman and the Oak Bluffs Fire Department.
Primary 1 Classroom
- Miss Cristina and Miss Rebecca

The sensorial materials have been very popular this week. During the years between ages three and six, as children develop their senses, their attention is directed toward the environment. The primary purpose of the sensorial exercises is that "the child will train himself to observe, that she is led to make comparisons between objects, to form judgements, to reason and to decide." (Dr. Maria Montessori in Dr. Montessori's Own Handbook.) These materials are specifically designed to help the child develop discrimination, order, and to broaden and refine the senses. These materials also help prepare a child to be logical, aware, and perceptive. Materials, such as the Pink Tower, Brown Stair, Red Rods, and Knobbed Cylinders, help develop visual discrimination of difference in dimension, width, length, and size. Other activities that enhance the child's visual sense are the Color Tablets, Geometric Cabinet, and the Constructive Triangles. The Touch Tablets and Fabric Matching isolate the tactile sense, while the Sound Cylinders train the auditory sense. Many of these lessons can have a more complex outcome by adding a blindfold, removing one sense while relying on others.
Primary 2 Classroom  
- *Miss Chris and Miss Holly*

How many patterns do you see in the space around you? Many times, we look at patterns and do not "see" them. Patterns balance our view of life and add to its beauty. There is a certain symmetrical harmony that comes from understanding how patterns bring a natural order to our lives. It is all part of our tendency to establish order in our everyday lives. If you give a child a box full of paper cups, she will make some interesting arrangements with them, but eventually she will most likely stack them into a pyramid. Again, this demonstrates the natural tendency to make sense of everyday experiences through patterns.

Patterns help children learn sequencing and to make predictions, which leads to mathematical skills and to establishing order in life. In a Montessori primary classroom, children first learn how to sort colors, shapes, sizes, and sounds. Once your child has grasped the sorting concept, he/she can begin to see and create simple patterns. The children see patterns through the use of a variety of tools, such as pattern blocks, colored shapes at the light table, and many of the sensorial activities. An older primary classroom student notices slightly more complicated sequencing, such as knowing the days of the week, months of the year, or odd and even numbering. These materials help to reinforce the importance of patterns and relationships. Through an understanding of patterns, children are able to make predictions about what comes next.

During our weekly session with Miss Ava, the children were able to spin their wool into strands of yarn. They each picked a piece of dyed wool to spin and were surprised to see how strong the wool became once it was spun into yarn.
Elementary I Classroom  
- Miss Nora

The Elementary I students started the week with a fun trip to the ice arena. They started a six-week skating program with Beth O’Conner. Everyone loved being on the ice and are very excited for the next lesson.

The students had a great visit with Mary Sage Napolitan. This week, they studied worms! They learned about the red wiggler worms and their jobs. These worms are important to soil and help with composting. While they made scientific observations, they were able to decipher the body parts. As a follow up, they sketched their scientific observations and wrote down interesting facts they learned. They also took a trip up to the Elementary II campus to share their ideas for the expansion of the elementary program.
Elementary II Classroom
- Miss Irene

The Upper Elementary students, along with the Middle School, have had a very busy week. In addition to Island Grown and meeting with Ty's husband, Bob, about our future school, we had our first theater class with Joyce Maxner and met a special guest at MV Museum.

Joyce introduced her class this week with a discussion about playwriting. She brought with her three plays: Our Town, Harry Potter and the Cursed Child, and A Midsummer Night's Dream. Joyce pointed out to the students that writing dialogue in plays can be quite challenging. She left the books for them to look over so that they could get an idea of how to begin. The students were broken up into two groups and will work in those groups until the end of the year to create two 15-minute, one-scene plays. They will write, produce, direct, and act out their plays for their parents. This week's homework is to meet with their groups and brainstorm ideas for the plots of their plays. We spent the remainder of the class playing theater games, which the students found hysterical. The last game involved working in pairs with one person talking gibberish and the other responding in English!

Our guest speaker at MV Museum was Linda Coombs who is a program director of the Aquinnah Cultural Center. She is an author and historian from the
Wampanoag tribe of Gay Head (Aquinnah). Linda had spectacular photos and paintings of Wampanoag ancestors who lived the whaling life. She showed us the logo of the Wampanoag tribe with Moshup holding up a whale. This led to a discussion on traditions of whaling and the spiritual life of all living things, which are held in high regard in their culture. Native Americans were whaling long before the settlers who traveled here in the 1600s. They were very knowledgeable about harpooning and the habits of whales. Many captains sought out local east coast natives to work on their whaling ships. Whaling for the Wampanoags was not for capital gain though. Hunters honored the spirit of the whale, which would give its life to help feed and clothe people. We ended the class with a short video called, How Whales Change the Climate. It is about five minutes long, and we highly recommend it for all ages. If you would like to watch it, follow this link!

Middle School
- Miss Ty

There was a lot of work and study that happened this week in the Middle School. We began the next novel study, Johnny Tremain by Esther Forbes. This novel is in the historical fiction genre and follows an adolescent boy during the exciting years of 1773 to 1775 in Boston. This correlates to our study in history of the British colonies in America, culminating in the American Revolution.

Mary Sage Napolitan of Island Grown Schools introduced the class to worms! In our on-going study of soil and composting, Mary Sage explained that the “castings” made by the worms (which are actually their poop) are rich in nutrients and can be used as compost. We will order some red wriggler worms and construct our own worm bin.

On Thursday, we were visited by Bob Johnston, a member of the board and Ty’s husband. Bob led Matthew and the combined Upper and Lower Elementary classes in a focus group to generate ideas for the new campus.

Questions they answered were: What do you like most about VMS? What are your favorite parts of the day? What would you say to a friend about VMS? What do your parents like most about VMS? If VMS had magical powers, what would they be? The children were focused and enthusiastic in this process and offered a lot of thoughts, feelings, and theories. A favorite part for the children was breaking up into small groups and brainstorming ideas for a “lunchbox for 25 years from now”. We got some fabulous new designs!
Late Day
- Miss Weezie and Miss Cristina

The Late Day students had the opportunity to be young illustrators this week. We read Crockett Johnson's *Harold and the Purple Crayon* about a boy who creates his adventures by drawing with a purple crayon. After I read and we shared ideas, students used a purple dry erase marker on our white board to recreate Harold's imaginary journey with their own unique embellishments.

Outdoor time is such a key aspect of a child's day. I firmly believe that experiences in nature can support all modes of learning. We observe and appreciate this every day at VMS. On Tuesday afternoon, the children lined up at our Main Street fence with lively enthusiasm. The West Tisbury Public Works Department truck stopped, greeted us warmly, and introduced us to their new smaller street sweeper. The children cheered and waved, so excited to see an unusual vehicle in use.

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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
An independent school serving PreK through Grade 8.

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

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