"Free choice is one of the highest of all the mental processes."
- Maria Montessori

October Calendar

**Tuesday, October 2nd - Picture Day!**
Order forms were sent home today and must be returned no later than Tuesday morning at drop off.

**Tuesday, October 2nd - Parent Social (6:30-8:00 pm)**
Please join us for a special night for all parents. Meet, Mingle & Learn!

**School Closed Friday, October 5 - Professional Development**

**School Closed Monday, October 8 - Columbus Day**

**Thursday, October 11 - Movie Night (5:30 pm)**
Join us for "Moana" on the big screen at VMS. Pizza and popcorn will be served!

**Tuesday, October 16 - Coffee & Conversations (8:45-9:30 am)**
Join Ms. Debbie and for coffee and conversations. Get to know the VMS community while discussing topics related to your child’s development and education.

**Saturday, October 20 - Truckin' MV (11:00-1:30)**
A fun event for the whole family! See touch and explore unique vehicles from the Island community at the MV Regional High School parking lot. We need lots of helping hands to make this event successful - please return your volunteer form!

**Noon Dismissal on Thursday, October 25th & Friday, October 26th - Parent/Teacher Conferences**

**Tuesday, October 30 - Middle School Night at the Norton Street Campus.**
Learn about the VMS middle school program and scholarship opportunities!

See the full school calendar [here](#).
Congratulations to Carly and Grace Coggins, grade 6 at VMS, for earning the Bronze Award, the highest honor a Girl Scout Junior can achieve!

Middle School
- Miss Ty

The first month of school has gone smoothly and we have been very busy here at our Camp Jabberwocky campus! One of the most exciting events has been the launch of the Friday Pizza Lunch Program, operated exclusively for the VMS “family” of students and staff. Using Wolf’s Den Pizza as a supplier, the students offer a juice box, a piece of fruit, and a slice of pizza to customers. We are happy to say that there are many families who are participating in our fund-raising! Profits from the business will help fund a trip to Washington, DC in June of 2019.

We have enjoyed watching the progress of the building project on the main building here at the camp which is being created by South Mountain Company. We are getting a "blow-by-blow" explanation of the entire process. The first
visit was from the architect of the project, Matt Coffey, who walked us through a detailed look at the job of an architect and all the work it took before the builders even showed up on the site. Then each week we get a small update of the work that’s going on, and the reasons why the job is unfolding as it is. This will continue throughout the school year, giving all students a thorough understanding of what it takes to build a building!

In Science this year we are starting with a study of the Animal Kingdom. As a part of the work with invertebrates we were lucky to have Fred Hotchkiss, Matthew’s grandfather, give a wonderful presentation about starfish, in the Echinodermata Phylum. Fred is an expert with these incredibly interesting animals, and brought a lot of specimen along with a colorful slideshow. The students were mesmerized!

After a study of the Constitution in Humanities, we began studying the “new nation,” and the growing pains that it experienced as the new government began to form itself. Westward expansion and the Louisiana Purchase will follow. We are reading *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* by Mark Twain to connect roughly to this time period.
Elementary II Classroom
- Miss Irene

It has been so much fun getting back to school with both returning and new students. Our class is cohesive, entertaining and learning rich with valuable experiences that we can all learn from.

Our weekly spelling and writing assignments will aid students when working on cultural projects or book reports. The use of vivid verbs and various transitional words and phrases are the focus of writing right now.

Math students in the Elementary II class have been reviewing math facts to prepare them for operations, fractions and geometry. After reviewing the timeline of ancient civilizations from last year, we spent our first two weeks of school learning about the Byzantine Period. To give students a feel for what the Middle Ages was like, we watched a World History documentary called Secrets of the Castle: Beyond The Castle Walls | Episode 5 (Medieval Documentary) | Timeline. To learn about lives of castle builders and how the medieval castle was actually built, watch a video here.

On Wednesdays we have been learning about architecture through South Mountain Company. The renovation project of the cafeteria is underway. We have met with the head architect and project manager to learn about the preliminary stages of the renovation project. A special thanks goes out to Deirdre Bohan (Declan's mother) who organized this afternoon enrichment class which we will follow the whole year to learn about the renovation process including architecture & interior design, project management and construction! Students are filling out Career Research questionnaires after interviewing each person involved with the project. We have also used this template to interview Fossil Fred (Fred Hodgkiss) who taught our kids all about sea stars, and Mary Sobel owner of Dock Street Coffee Shop, to learn about running a small business. Students interests and suggestions will guide us to additional career
research opportunities throughout the year.

In preparation for World Peace Day the class learned a great deal of information about the Peace Corps and what they do. Students collaboratively researched the organization and made a poster to teach Miss Ty and Matthew all about it. We are hoping to get an interview in November with Laura Jernegan, Debbie’s daughter, who is a former Peace Corps volunteer.

On September 16th, it was exciting to see some of the VMS students participating in the Library Fun Run and 5K. We even had a chance to socialize and run with some Montessori alumni parents and students!

Tennis is off to a great start too! Even though we are missing our old friend and instructor Scott who moved away, Mike is doing a great job keeping the players active and engaged with fun games and drills.

Thank you to the Coggins family for bringing in a dodge ball set and a pickle ball game for the kids to use during recess. We also have several basketballs that get plenty of use for HORSE, small scrimmages and one-on-one games.

MMUN (Model Montessori United Nations) which is held on Mondays from 2:30-4:00 is up and running. Participants of this club have chosen topics, countries and partners for the conference. They have already explored their country’s history and this week they will create a tri-fold brochure to promote tourism in their country.
Elementary I
Classroom
- Miss Nora

The K-2 class has had a wonderful start to the year. We’ve been working on days of the week, months and abbreviations. This is leading into our study of time.

We have begun our work with Island Grown Schools. We prepped the beds, talked about the life cycle of seeds and
planted some varieties of peas. This tied in nicely with our unit on Botany. In the classroom we have been studying different types of trees and leaves. We went on a nature walk to identify the trees in our neighborhood through their leaves, colors, and shapes.

We have started Creation Stories and Myths which the students always enjoy. Today we read the creation story “the God With No Hands”. This story is the first in the Five Great Lessons. In this story we describe the coming of the universe. It is told with impressionistic charts, pictures and experiments. Today we did the follow up experiments and learned about solids, liquids and gasses, laws of attraction and magnetism. The culmination ended with a volcano that was in keeping with the end of the creation story.

We began our studies of geometry learning about the properties and forms of circles, squares, rectangles and polygons. The math lessons the children explored sensorially in the Primary classroom are now evolving with simple definitions and concepts that they can express in their own words.
Primary 2 Classroom  
- Miss Chris and Miss Carrie

The beginning of the school year is always a time for many emotions. Excitement, hesitation, curiosity and sometimes even a little sadness. I am sure each of you have experienced a few of these emotions as you pass through the gate, as have your children, but I want to confidently say that each day brings new progress and happiness throughout the classroom. The children have settled in nicely and are learning the routines of our day. Many new friendships are being made or are being re-kindled and relationships with other classroom and specialty teachers are forming.

The children have had their first session of gardening with Miss Ava from Island Grown Preschool and their first music class with Miss Joyce. These specialty programs occur each week and the children look forward to participating weekly. Our class will also be going to the Vineyard Haven library monthly for a story and craft. We had our first walking field trip to the library and met with Miss Emily, the children's librarian, to read some stories about leaves and then created a leaf mosaic. We will be tying in some of our science lessons together with the themes of the stories from the library.

The children have been exploring with the materials on the shelves, receiving new lessons or reviewing lessons from the years past. Miss Carrie and I have been assessing each child as to where their interests lie and where they are in their development so that we can introduce lessons that would not only interest and excite each child but to help build their confidence and independence which allows for further progress in their development. Maria Montessori said "These very children reveal to us the most vital need of their development, saying: 'Help me to do it alone!'"
Primary 1 Classroom
- Miss Cristina and Miss Rebecca

Welcome to our new families and welcome back to our returning families. We had such an amazing first month of school. All the students were very excited to start the new school year.
The transition of all the students attending their full schedules was a success. We try to build a structure into the day that will be familiar to each child: coming into the class, changing into indoor shoes, sitting on the rug and talking with friends. During the working period, I play some relaxing music to create a calming environment in class.

We have been using our outdoor space either watching our garden, hammering, using big funnels with the water tank, painting rocks and playing with shells and shovels in the sandbox. We have been lucky with the weather so the first week we even went for a nature walk to Little Owen beach. The students collected rocks, shells and sea glass. We will definitely do more nature walks throughout the year.

For World Peace Day we read books about peace and practiced the 'Light a candle for peace' song. We also did an art project with the students hands prints. Children love to talk about peace, and some of them even understand that peace should happen every day and not just on one day.

This week we had our first gardening lesson with Miss Ava who will visit us every Thursday and we also had our first music class with Miss Joyce who will visit us every Wednesday.

I am really looking forward to this year and to getting to know your children more each day.
Late Day

- Miss Weezie

Our Late Day Program resumed this year on September 10th. It includes students from both Primary classrooms as well as two Elementary students. Once again, I will be supervising Late Day along with another V.M.S. staff member. We will provide an after school program that is both safe, enriching and fun for our students.

Following rest time or lessons, depending on the student's age, they enjoy an after school snack that is sent from home. We often have stories, songs, puppet shows and arts and crafts, with emphasis on outdoor play, barring rain or bitter cold. Please provide seasonally appropriate, comfortable clothing and footwear. Maria Montessori stated: "Play is the work of children". Recently, The American Academy of Pediatrics recommended more "self motivated adult hands-off play for children". So, keeping in mind all the benefits of play, we will do our best to meet the needs of the "whole child".
Recommended Reading
"At Home with Montessori" by Patricia Oriti (available in the VMS office!)

Book Corner for Parents
"Robot-Proof: Higher Education in the age of artificial intelligence" by Joseph Aoun

"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 school serving PreK through Grade 8.
Fostering a lifetime love of learning, one child at a time.