Thank you to all the VMS families who joined us this month at Offshore Ale for Dine to Donate. We raised almost $600 which will fund enrichment activities, scholarships, new classroom materials and more!

Add the Monday, February 11th school potluck and the Friday, March 22nd La Soffitta Dine to Donate to your calendars. Winter is a great time for relaxation, comfort food and community! See below for details on these events.

February Calendar

**Monday, February 11:** Family Potluck (5:30 - 7:00 p.m.) at the Main Street Campus
You asked for it, so let's make it happen! All VMS families pre-K through Grade 8 are invited to a potluck dinner held at the VMS main campus. Siblings, grandparents and caregivers are welcome, too!

*Please use the sign up sheet in the hallway to let us know how many people will attend and what dish you'll bring.*

*Please no peanuts or eggs due to classroom allergies.*

**Monday, February 18:** No School Closed for President's Day

**Tuesday, February 19:** Coffee & Conversations (8:45 - 9:30 a.m.)
Join Ms. Debbie in her office for coffee and conversations. Engage with other VMS families while discussing topics related to your child’s development and education.

**February 25 through March 1:** No School Enjoy the Winter Break

Looking Ahead

**Thursday, March 7:** Big Night Out Meeting (7:00 PM)
Tuesday, March 19: Coffee & Conversations (8:45 - 9:30 AM)

Thursday, March 21: Special Visitor's Day (9:30 -10:30 AM)

Friday, March 22: Dine to Donate at La Soffitta (5:00 - 9:00 PM)

Call for Volunteers

Big Night Out sponsor and donation solicitation is underway! You may have noticed the list on the hallway corkboard. Here's how you can participate:

- Write your name down next to any business that you will contact so we don't duplicate efforts.
- Take a "script" and bring forms with you for the businesses to fill out.
- Return forms to the office so we can thank the sponsors/donors.

Thank you to Wallace & Co | Sotheby's International Realty and D. Best Construction for becoming Big Night Out sponsors! If you, your business or employer are interested in becoming a sponsor, we have some great incentives including tickets to the event and promotion on social media!

Thank you to all VMS families who have already contributed to the Annual Fund - and congratulations to Claudia Nelson who won a health club membership to the Mansion House! This raffle prize was generously donated by VMS board member and current parent, Nili Beth Morgan, as an incentive to reach our goal of 100% family participation.

We are proud to announce that 100% of the board of trustees, teachers and staff at VMS have given to the Annual Fund.

The raffle may be over, but it is not too late to make a difference! Just click the button below or drop your gift in the payment box at school.

DONATE TODAY
Matthew has completed one stage in an enormous project, one on which he has been working since September. He is a delegate to Montessori Model United Nations (MMUN) and is representing Democratic Republic of the Congo. A quote from one of their publications says, **MMUN stimulates Montessori students to learn about the complete operations of the United Nations, the world’s largest humanitarian and peace keeping organization, as they participate in a global education learning experience.** This is an after-school and at-home activity, so Matthew has worked on his own time to generate the papers described below. Irene Wendt, our upper elementary teacher, is guiding the VMS students through this process.

This is Matthew’s fourth time attending the MMUN, which is held each year in New York City. Through a process of role playing, Matthew will become a diplomatic ambassador and debate current issues on the agenda of the UN. This year, he is working with other Montessori middle school students from around the world, and his topics are “Prohibition of Dumping of Radioactive Waste” and “Nonproliferation in the Middle East.” Together, the students will prepare resolutions to present to the General Assembly.

Matthew has several other parts of this project to produce, including a poster/display board about his country and an introductory speech.

The learning outcomes associated with MMUN are characteristic of the important principles of Montessori education and its goals of individual self-actualization, societal reconstruction and world peace. MMUN teaches students the importance of tolerance, and more importantly, the pertinence of resolving differences through dialogue and compromise. These are noble aims for this period in history!
Elementary II Classroom
- Miss Irene

The upper elementary students started an improv class with Joyce Maxner for the second half of the year. They will play several games each class to learn to spontaneously use their imaginations, creativity, salesmanship, hand, body and facial expressions and listening skills. At the end of the year, the students’ parents will come in to participate in a class with the kids.

The Jabberwocky campus renovation project is on schedule, and we recently had a tour of the main building and the new infirmary. Students had many questions about the heating and electrical systems which they saw installed.

My math students are working on common multiples and beginning the study of a circle while getting used to using a compass and protractor. In history, we just finished up with Google slide presentations on prominent Renaissance figures, including Galileo, Raphael, Martin Luther, Gutenberg, Leonardo and Michelangelo. Students have chosen new people to write autobiographies for solo presentations. They will research their person, dress as them and tell us about their lives. Carly will be Joan of Arc, Declan - Vasco da Gama, Nina - Catherine de Medici, Gracie - Queen Elizabeth I, and Marysol - Mary Queen of Scots. Currently, we are reading *The Prince and the Pauper* and *Dragon’s Bait*.

Tim of Island Grown has been playing adaption games with the kids to show them how animals and plants have developed certain attributes which help them to survive as a species. He also brought in seed catalogs, and the students have decided on a list of possible vegetables to grow in our garden at Thimble Farm. Tim has a surprise cooking project for the students next Monday. At the same time, students are learning about the needs of plants, which involves them presenting experiments to demonstrate how plants grow, make food and adapt to different environments.

This Wednesday, our class will be joining Ms. Nora’s class to take a trip to the new Martha’s Vineyard Museum. We will do a walk through of the museum still in progress. They will have a chance to do some writing and make observations. We will do a “before-and-after” visit again after the museum has officially opened.
January has been a fun month filled with enrichment. We picked up where we left off at Sense of Wonder and continued our clay work. We have sculptures and pottery pieces drying. We are looking forward to the glazing and firing so we can bring our pieces home. We finished our whaling unit with Martha’s Vineyard Museum. The unit culminated with beautiful illustrations of various whales. It was a mixed-media composition. The materials included water color crayons, watercolor paint, permanent marker and salt for various effects.

With Island Grown, we brainstormed plants for garden beds. We decided on which quadrant of the garden each type of plant would fit best. We have been closely monitoring the progress of our lemon trees. So far, we have two sprouts. All we need is one healthy stem for the tree to grow. We have been familiarizing ourselves with fruits and vegetables with an ABC exercise to name or illustrate different plants that start with each letter of the alphabet.

In class, our cultural studies have moved into the Five Kingdoms of Life. The Monera Kingdom, which includes bacteria and viruses, consists of very simple single-cell organisms that cannot make their own food. They are the oldest kinds of life on earth. The second is the Protista Kingdom, which is also made up of one cell organisms that can not make their own food. They live in wet places. Diatoms and amoebas are protistas. The Fungus Kingdom is the third kingdom. It has many cells. They can make their own food. Yeast and mushrooms are kinds of fungi. The fourth is The Plant Kingdom. They can make their own food but usually do not move around. They have many cells. And the fifth kingdom and most developed is the Animal Kingdom. We have just started to study various parts of this kingdom.
January has been a fun and exciting month. We had three new students join our classroom this month. Please welcome Grace Sequin, Nicholas Curelli and Victoria Batista and their families to our class.

The children have been able to participate in new programs, such as A Visit with Officer Max and Dance with the Yard. For the third year in a row, Detective Max Sherman has been visiting the primary classrooms for 3-4 weeks. Each week, he brings along different community helpers (firefighters, EMTs and paramedics) to show the children what each member of his group does and the equipment that they might use. Max asks both a man and a woman helper to come each week to show the children that all people are able to do all jobs. The first week, Max came with Officer Jill and together they showed the children the different parts of their uniforms and a police cruiser. Last week, Kyle and Lindsay came along with Max to talk about what a paramedic’s job is and to show them interesting items that might be used if someone is hurt or falls ill. The children got to climb in an ambulance to see what the inside of the vehicle looks like. This week, the firefighters will come, and I know that will be the highlight of Max’s visits as the children will be able to spray the hose, weather permitting.

Dance class has begun, and we are fortunate to be able to participate in this program for another year. Jesse from The Yard comes to our class once a week to show the children different ways to move their bodies using music, rhythms and imagination. She starts with some gentle stretching and moves to creating shapes with the body. The children have the opportunity to be dancers and then audience members while their peers become the dancers. This is a fun way to get some more exercise during these cold winter days.

During gardening this month, Miss Ava began a unit on fiber. She brought in
wool for the children to wash, comb and card and then dye. The children will be
spinning the dyed wool into yarn this week.

The children have been working very hard on their lessons this month.
Everyone is engaged and focused. I have added some new geometric puzzles,
writing lessons and geographical land forms for the children to enjoy.
Primary 1 Classroom  
- Miss Cristina and Miss Rebecca

When you enter our classroom, you will notice that the environment is well ordered and beautiful. From the youngest children to the oldest, they are taught to choose work on their own, carry their own trays, and wipe up their own spills. Tools and furniture are child-sized, so work can be completed with minimal frustration. Of course, the adults give assistance when necessary, but it is our greatest pleasure to observe a child being totally independent in a difficult and multi-stepped exercise. The prepared environment allows the child freedom to choose his or her own work and to complete that work at his/her own pace. The environment itself guides the child! It is also wonderful to watch an unfortunate spill......often there are several children who rush to help by picking up the many, many beads that are scattered across the floor!

"The first aim of the prepared environment is, as far as it is possible, to render the growing child independent of the adult." (Maria Montessori. The Secret of Childhood, 1966.)

A new lesson on the shelf is "Animals of the World". This is a "big work", as I call it, because it has many sections, many pieces and it takes a long time of focused activity. Two children can work on it together. Each continent is taken from the puzzle map and placed on its own blue square. The children then identify four animals that come from that continent and place them on the square. Those who are beginning readers or even learning their sounds, place printed cards with the names on the animals. All this culminates in a booklet of the animals and continents.

Another popular work this month has been to color the flags of North America. In order to do this work, they need to carry the flag to the table. We talked about how important a flag is to the people who live in the country it represents, and for that reason, we have to be respectful when we carry it. The students like to help, be responsible and take care of the materials in our classroom.

Miss Ava showed the students the difference between the wool that had been cleaned and the wool that still needed to be cleaned. After this lesson, the children got to put some wool in a Ziploc bag, add food coloring to it and then
squeeze it to see how the wool began to change colors. They had to leave the bags in school so that they can keep working with the dyed wool in the following weeks.

Late Day
- Miss Weezie

Our changeable winter weather certainly poses a dilemma in terms of clothing and outdoor activities. As you know, we try to be outside unless the temps are dangerously low or it is raining heavily; therefore, it is best to send children with warm outerwear daily.

We recently read and enjoyed Jan Brett's *The Mitten*. One of the author's signature techniques in her illustrations is to incorporate a preview of what's
ahead in the story on each page. This story tells of animals who seek shelter in a boy's lost mitten. As we read along, students were able to name the next animal trying to crawl inside. It's a wonderful story that promotes interesting questions and discussion.

*Owl Moon* by Jane Yolen is another favorite winter book. After reading, we used our imaginations to take an indoor Owl Prowl to stretch the story. Felix Neck will once again host their guided nighttime Owl Prowl called "Screech and Hoot" on April 17th at 7:30. These are informative and family-friendly events.

Remember: "There is no APP to replace your lap".

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**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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