



Turtle Tracks

April 16, 2010

A WEEKLY EMAIL NEWSLETTER FOR THE VERMONT COMMONS SCHOOL COMMUNITY

MARK YOUR CALENDAR

APR 2-17

Awesome April Auction

APR 23

Last day of classes for seniors with approved projects

APR 26-30

Spring Break

MAY 14

Grandparent's Day
8:30-noon

VCS Awesome April Auction

BIDDING CLOSSES SATURDAY at 8:00

The Curling Turtles take Third Place in Most \$ Raised!

Submitted by Mary Hamilton-Homer



Team Vermont Commons School Curling Turtles raised \$1020.00 for the HowardCenter in their Curling Challenge in March. Team members from left to right are: Greg Hamilton, Mary Beth Hamilton, John Homer (Will Homer's Dad) and Mary Hamilton-Homer (Will Homer's Mom and Chair of the VCS Board of Trustees). A very sincere thank you to all those in the Vermont Commons Community who generously gave to support the HowardCenter, who, through youth,

family and developmental services, fulfill their mission to "improve the well-being of children, adults, families, and communities".

In yet another example of Vermont Commons students providing service to the community, the VCS Curl Runnings team also participated and raised money for this worthy cause.

They are: JJ Strausser, Lex Jackson, Willie Strausser, and Andrew Jaffe.



Head of School:

Peter Gilmore

FACULTY & STAFF

Greg Askew

Chance Cardamone-
Knewstubb

Mark Cline Lucey

Jennifer Cohen

Adriana Comtois

Conor Driscoll

Peter Goff

Kathy Hockman

Zhenyan Li

Hans Manske

Ben Patrick

Jessica Redmond

Jordan Romm

Cara Simone

Jasmine Walker

Ben Wang

Assistant Head of
School: Hans Manske

Dean of Faculty:
Cara Simone

Director of Academic
Enrichment Center:
JoAnna Easton

Director of Admissions &
College Counseling:
Sarah Soule

Director of Development:
Jordan Romm

Business Office:
Emily Tupper

Registrar:
Allison Fayle

Marketing:
Wendy McArdle

Turtle Tracks Editors:
Hannah Stanyon and
Allison Fayle

To Parents and the VCS Community,

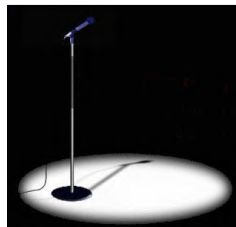
Earlier this week I announced to the students and faculty my intention to depart from VCS this coming summer. I've recently accepted a position as a professional climbing guide and mountaineer in Rainier National Park. While this is a dream come true for me, the decision to leave VCS is one that I wrestled with for a long time. My time here has been truly incredible, and it has been a true privilege to work with such a dedicated faculty, such engaging students, and such supportive parents. There will always be a place in my heart for VCS, and although I will be separate from VCS physically, it is my hope to remain a member of the school's extended family.

Sincerely,

-Conor Driscoll-

Evening of Readings

Submitted by Hannah Stanyon



The second Evening of Readings was a blast. People read excerpts from short stories, *Hard Times* narrative fiction, memoirs, poems and more. Willie Strausser read an excerpt about a girl remembering her dad, called "The Organ." Elena Mudd read from her memoir, making the whole audience laugh with "My Mother Can't Drive" (in which, not surprisingly, her mother couldn't drive - she was stopped by the police three times in one night). Phineas Schlossberg read an excerpt about Mr. Gradgrind and Mr. Bounderbee in a couple's counseling session, making the audience feel as if they knew the two characters from Dickens' *Hard Times*. The wide range of genres and subjects made for an entertaining night, with summer poems, stories about fair food, cooking, and Jane Eyre.

Along with the readings, people could have a drink and a snack. The refreshments were almost all gone by the end of the readings, because the readings weren't done until 8:00 pm! They started at 6:00 pm, when Cara Simone and Peter Gilmore thanked all the teachers and staff that helped put the Evening of Readings together. Thanks, Cara, Peter, and everyone, for making this Evening of Readings successful!

Vermont Commons Science Instructor Awarded \$27,000 in Grant Funding from NSF

Submitted by Wendy McArdle

Peter Goff has a passion for science and nature. He has been teaching science at Vermont Commons School in South Burlington since 1997 -- when the small, independent school was founded by the Skiff family. His mission is very simple: To produce naturalists.

This spring Goff submitted two National Science Foundation grant applications in conjunction with Dr. Lori Stevens and Dr. Donna Rizzo at the University of Vermont to examine the "Whirling Disease" system. This is a disease of salmonid fish (primarily members of the trout family) caused by a microscopic parasite that also spends part of its life cycle in an aquatic worm.



Vermont Commons School

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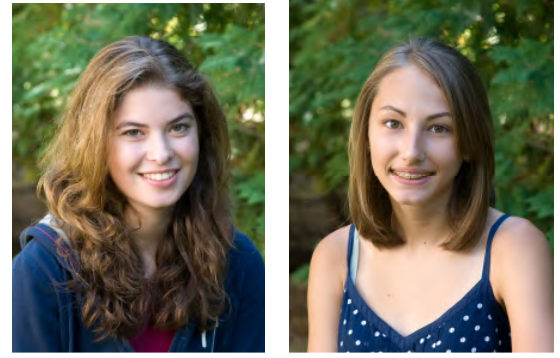
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Goff was very excited when he learned that he had been awarded a Research Experience for Teachers grant to fund his involvement in the genetics research and computer modeling components of the study. He was **ecstatic**, however, when he learned that he had also been awarded a Research Assistantship for High School Students, which funds two female students from Vermont Commons to participate in the project as well. Seven girls applied for the two spots. The two students who were selected are (shown above) Shana Wolfstein (a junior from Burlington) and Sarah Mueller (a sophomore from Enosburg Falls)



"This is an amazing opportunity for both Shana and Sarah," explains Goff. "They will spend one week living at UVM in the student dorms while working with the team of scientists and myself while we learn the genetic techniques necessary for the fieldwork. Then we will travel to Montana where we will spend a week knee deep in streams hunting for trout and aquatic worms." The grant covers all expenses at UVM and in Montana, as well as money for equipment and even a stipend for each student. According to Goff, "We wrote the grant specifically targeting girls, as both Drs. Stevens and Rizzo are deeply committed to improving the opportunities for women in science."

VCS Delegation Tackles World Issues at Dartmouth College

Submitted by Mark Cline-Lucey and Catherine Welch



Twelve VCS students traveled to Dartmouth College last weekend for a three-day Model United Nations Conference. Mark Cline-Lucey, Social Studies Department Chair at VCS, and Catherine Welch, a Student Teacher from Saint Michael's College, organized this delegation and supervised the conference weekend. This 5th Annual Dartmouth College Model United Nations Conference was attended by 14 other institutions, with a total of over 350 high school students participating in the weekend!

The VCS delegation spent 13½ hours in their respective committee sessions discussing, debating, presenting, and conferencing in an ultimate effort to solve pressing world issues. Our VCS delegation represented the countries of Austria and Afghanistan, and our delegates discussed world issues such as the weaponization of outer space, small arms trade, humanitarian disaster in South-East Asia, urban slums, and an increasingly tense relationship between the United States and Iran.

All twelve delegates worked amazingly hard at this conference, and three students were recognized for their efforts. Josh Decatur and Julian Lenz received Honorable Mentions for their contribution to their committee, and Will Homer received a Verbal Commendation! When the VCS delegation was not slaving away in their committee sessions, they were walking around downtown Hanover, NH, getting their groove-on at the social on Saturday night, relaxing at Joey Carrara's house on Lake Sunapee (where we stayed



for the weekend), or eating some tasty burrito's from Boloco's! By the time we arrived back at VCS on Sunday afternoon, everyone was exhausted, but excited to starting planning for next year! Start thinking about whether you are interested in participating a Model UN conference. You wouldn't want to miss out on next year's trip!

National Honor Society Inductees

Submitted by Peter Goff, NHS advisor

Congratulations to the new members of the VCS chapter of the National Honor Society:

Sophomore inductees:

Lex Jackson
Leslie Gadway
Sarah Mueller
Sandra Ackert-Smith
Justine Maqowan

Junior inductees:

Shana Wolfstein
Schuyler Cowan
Vivien Enriquez
Mikela Boudette

These new members will be formally inducted at a ceremony during May's Night of Glory. They will join our current Secritariat, Ted Retzloff, and the graduating class of seniors (Catie Mueller, Joe Congdon, Eric Fournier, Sophie Daigle, and Elena Mudd). Currently the NHS chapter is working on ways to expand and improve its successful peer-tutoring program.

Update On VCS 2010 Annual Fund

Submitted by Kathleen Carrara, Annual Fund Chair

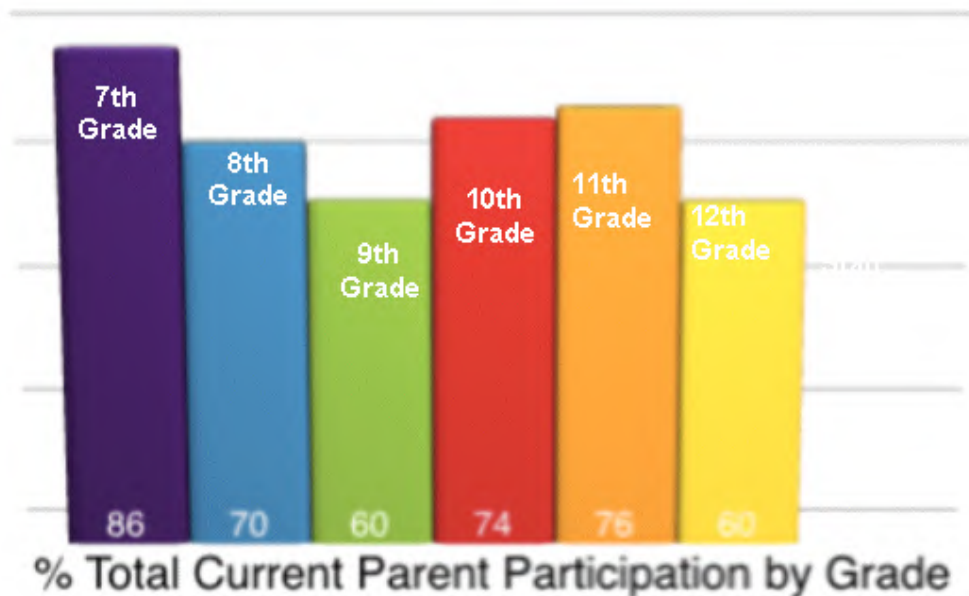
GOAL for 2010 Annual Fund: \$265,000

Gifts as of TODAY: \$243,387

\$21,613 remaining to our goal!

We are getting closer to our goal. Our current parent participation is **71%**. We are hoping everyone (100%) in our parent community will support the Annual Fund. If you haven't given yet- it's easy, log on to www.vermontcommons.org/giving. Remember, it's *participating* that counts.

OUR GOAL IS 100% FAMILY PARTICIPATION



How is your child's grade doing? Thank you to all of our parents who have already supported the Annual Fund and to those who this week have promised to give to the annual fund. I look forward to updating this graph just after vacation as we are sure to make great progress! Stay tuned. As many of you know, we have our Spring Phone-a-Thon scheduled for May and we need volunteers. It will be a fun, rewarding night full of energy and support for our school. Contact Jordan Romm <jromm@vermontcommons.org> if you would like to help.

