



Turtle Tracks

September 18, 2009

A WEEKLY EMAIL NEWSLETTER FOR THE VERMONT COMMONS SCHOOL COMMUNITY

MARK YOUR CALENDAR

SEPT 21-25

Fall Encounter Week

SEPT 30

Picture Retakes

OCT 7

Early Dismissal
Parent Conferences
12:00

OCT 9

Common Text Day

OCT 14

PSAT Testing Day
Early Dismissal
12:00

OCT 16-17

Homecoming

OCT 22-24

NO SCHOOL
Fall Break

OCT 30

End of First Quarter

Senior/Seventh Grade Event

Submitted by Sarah Soule

This week the VCS Class of 2010 welcomed our new 7th graders to VCS with an evening of pizza and musical chairs. Here are some pictures from the event!



Head of School:

Peter Gilmore

FACULTY & STAFF

Chance Cardamone-
Knewstub

Mark Cline Lucey

Jennifer Cohen

Adriana Comtois

Conor Driscoll

Glenn Etter

Peter Goff

Kathy Hockman

Zhenyan Li

Hans Manske

Ben Patrick

Jessica Redmond

Jordan Romm

Cara Simone

Jasmine Walker

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 & Editor of
Turtle Tracks:
Allison Fayle

Marketing:
Wendy McArdle

Lunch Program Question

Submitted by Hans Manske



program for 2-3 days per week?

Please email me directly, hmanske@vermontcommons.org, if this is something you would be interested in or if you have further questions.

Over the summer, some work was done investigating the feasibility of having a hot lunch program at Vermont Commons School. So, before we proceed any further, we figured gauging parent interest in such a program would be key. What we are considering is having a local vendor provide a meal of healthy, predominantly local fare for a cost of around \$5 a day. So, the question for parents is this. Would your family be interested in such a

Picture Retakes Wednesday September 30th

Submitted by Sarah McGarghan

As pictures went home today, I just wanted to take a moment to thank you all for the opportunity of photographing your kids. I always have a blast doing it, and although the kids may not admit it, I think they have fun as well (hopefully it is evident by the great smiles they show me!). If you would like to purchase additional photos, inside your package you will find an additional order form. Please fill it out and either mail it to me at the address below or give it to Allison in the front office. There is one additional package that is available which is not on the order form...temporary tattoos! If you are interested, you can purchase 25 temporary tattoos of your student's image for \$15. How cool is that? Thanks again, and remember, a portion of the proceeds will be donated back to VCS!



Please make checks payable to:
srmphotography
577 Thompson's Point Rd
Charlotte, VT 05445

RETAKE DAY IS SCHEDULED ON: **Wednesday September 30, 2009**

VCS Research and Service Program

Submitted by Mark Cline Lucey

THE MISSION



The mission of the Research & Service Program is to go beyond the traditional disciplines, to go beyond the classroom walls, and to connect learning to community engagement and environmental stewardship in a fun, hands-on, and rewarding way. Ultimately, the Research & Service Program teaches students that with knowledge comes responsibility, and that they can and should have an active role in improving their communities. The Vermont Commons School's mission statement is very clear about our need to contribute positively to our community and our environment as we foster our sense of citizenship, both locally and globally.



Vermont Commons School

75 Green Mountain Dr.
So. Burlington, VT
05403

Phone: 802-865-8084

Fax: 802-865-2429

Email: info@vermontcommons.org

Website: <http://www.vermontcommons.org>

GENERAL DESCRIPTION

The Research & Service Program is a concrete manifestation of Vermont Commons School's deep commitment to Place-Based Education, Service Learning, and ecological stewardship.

The R&S Program provides a multi-aged setting that encourages leadership and fosters group skills.

Research & Service classes do not receive a traditional letter grade, however teachers send written comments home each quarter. Students are evaluated on their active participation, preparedness, attitude, mastery of project specific content, and leadership.

In order to do the research and follow it up with a meaningful service project, R&S courses run the duration of a semester and are offered during the fall (8th, 10th & 12th grade) and spring (7th, 9th & 11th grade).

WHAT IS PLACE-BASED EDUCATION?

Place-based education (PBE) immerses students in local heritage, cultures, landscapes, opportunities and experiences, using these as a foundation for the study of language arts, mathematics, social studies, science and other subjects across the curriculum. PBE emphasizes learning through participation in service projects for the local school and/or community.

Research has shown that well-designed initiatives can achieve the goals outlined below.

Place-based education can "feed three birds with the same seed" as it addresses the integrated goals of:

Student Achievement

PBE boosts students' engagement, academic achievement, and sense of personal efficacy as stewards of their local environment and community.

Community Social and Economic Vitality

PBE forges strong ties between local social and environmental organizations and their constituencies in the schools and community, which helps to improve quality of life and economic vitality.

Ecological Integrity

Through project-based learning, students make tangible contributions to resolving local environmental issues and conserving local environmental quality.

Principles of Successful Place-Based Education:

1. Learning takes place in the local community and environment.
2. Learning focuses on local themes, systems, and content.
3. Learning is personally relevant to the learner.
4. Learning experiences contribute to the community's vitality and environmental quality and support the community's role in fostering global environmental quality.
5. Learning is supported by strong and varied partnerships with local organizations, agencies, businesses, and government.
6. Learning is interdisciplinary.
7. Learning experiences are tailored to the local audience.
8. Learning is grounded in and supports the development of a love for one's place.
9. Local learning serves as the foundation for understanding and participating appropriately in regional and global issues.
10. Place-based education programs are integral to achieving other institutional goals.

H1N1 Influenza Information

Submitted by the Vermont Department of Health



Only a few months ago we were alerting you about the novel H1N1 or "swine flu". This new flu is still circulating in Vermont and across the states, and has especially affected school-age children. As you may know, flu can be easily spread from person to person. For this reason, schools are taking actions to reduce the spread of the usual seasonal flu and this new flu. We want to do everything we can to keep children safe and keep them learning during this flu season.

Here's how you can help to keep flu from spreading:

Teach your children good health habits and set a good example yourself.

Wash hands often and well with soap and water, or an alcohol-based hand rub. Cover coughs or sneezes with a tissue. If there is no tissue, coughing into a sleeve or elbow is better than coughing into hands. Don't share personal items like drinks, food or unwashed utensils. Stay home when you're sick.

Know the signs and symptoms of the flu. Your child may have fever (100 degrees or more), cough, sore throat, a runny or stuffy nose, body aches, headache and feeling very tired. Some people may also vomit or have diarrhea.

Keep sick children at home for at least 24 hours after they no longer have a fever or do not have signs of fever, without using fever-reducing drugs. Keeping sick children at home will reduce the number of people who may get infected.

Do not send sick children to school – or to the library or any public place. Any child who is determined to be sick while at school will be sent home. Plan now for how you will keep sick children home and away from others.

Get vaccinated. There won't be a vaccine for the new flu until later this fall, but everyone is encouraged to get vaccinated against the regular seasonal flu this year, so we have a better chance of keeping students, teachers, staff and families healthy. When the vaccine for the 2009 H1N1 flu is available, school-age children will be among the first to be offered vaccine. There will be more information to come as details are worked out.

For more information about the flu, with action steps for parents to use this school year, please visit www.healthvermont.gov, www.flu.gov, or dial 2-1-1.

Common Hour Speaker Suggestions

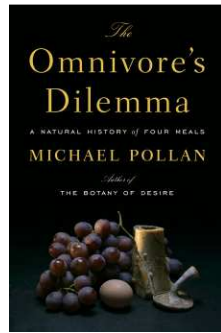
Submitted by Allison Fayle

Over the past several years, Vermont Commons School has been lucky to have a diverse array of individuals speak to the school community during our weekly Friday Common Hour. These speakers have shared their expertise on current health and social issues, their creative process as writers, artists, and film producers, and their insights on sustainability and the environment. If you know someone with experience in public speaking who would be interested in speaking to our community on topics related to the environmental and social mission of our school, please contact Hans Manske at hmanske@vermontcommons.org. VCS provides a modest honorarium to speakers.



Common Text Day is October 9th!

Submitted by Chance Cardamone-Knewstub



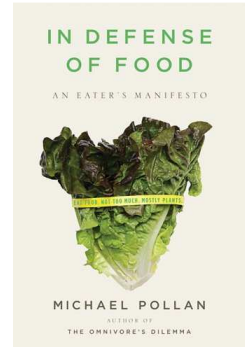
A reminder to all that Common Text Day is soon approaching. All members of the VCS community are invited to spend some or all of the day with us. We have a variety of activities in the works involving local food, local farms, and discussions of the issues brought up in our readings of *The Omnivore's Dilemma* and *In Defense of Food*.

A detailed schedule of the day will soon be forthcoming. But there are a few things you should know now:

Localvore potluck lunch: Each Core Group will be planning and preparing a potluck lunch focused on local foods.

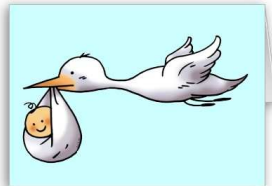
The Core Groups will meet on Oct 2 to plan their meal and then will prepare the components at home. During our Common Text day lunch, each Core Group will enjoy its food while also presenting on the "history" of the components of the meal.

We are also coordinating **field trips to local farms** for Common Text Day as well. As always, one of our limiting factors is transportation. If you are inclined to help us transport students on Friday, October 9th, please contact me.



The NEW Names & Faces Has Arrived

Submitted by Wendy McArdle



The 2009-2010 edition of *Names & Faces* is hot off the press. Directories will be distributed to parents in the school parking lot on Monday morning during Encounter Week drop-off and Friday afternoon during pickup. *Names & Faces* is a great way to get to know students & faculty, to support VCS community businesses and even setup carpools. Enjoy!

PSAT Testing October 14th

Submitted by Cara Simone

On October 14th, ninth, tenth, and eleventh-grade students will take the PSATs. These students received the College Board brochure, "Official Student Guide to the PSAT/NMSQT (Preliminary SAT/National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test)." It's important to note that only juniors will be competing in the National Merit Scholarship program. Freshmen and sophomores are not eligible. Please read over the materials carefully and complete the practice test.

Seventh, eighth, and twelfth-grade students will have regular morning classes. All students will be released at noon.



Feel free to contact Cara Simone with any questions.

