



# VERMONT COMMONS SCHOOL

MOVING OUT OF THE CLASSROOM AND INTO THE WORLD

## Press Release

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## Out of the Classroom and into the...Kitchen!



*VCS students Leynah McGarghan (Charlotte) and Cat Silverstein (St. Albans) make flatbread with George Schenk owner of American Flatbread in Waitsfield.*

Next week students at Vermont Commons School in South Burlington will celebrate the end of exams and the start of the second semester by participating in the Winter Encounter Week program. Encounter Weeks are offered three times each year and provide an opportunity for students to explore the wilderness and community by participating in intensive field-based programs. While some groups are preparing for a week of snowshoeing and cross country skiing in the Green Mountains, 5-days of community service at

various Burlington non-profit organizations, or a 10-day trip to Utah to attend the Sundance Film Festival, others will spend their Encounter Week in the kitchen, learning from local chefs who have a passion – *and talent* – for cooking with local foods.

The cooking class will feature a visit from **Eric Warnstedt**, executive chef and owner of Hen of the Wood restaurant in Waterbury. “I’m so excited that VCS students will have a chance to work with Eric,” says Jordan Romm, Director of Development at VCS and organizer of the cooking class. Warnstadt was voted one of the top 10 new chefs by Food & Wine Magazine in 2008 and he is committed to showcasing the freshest food from local growers who practice environmentally-sound agriculture. “That’s a really important message to convey to our students,” explains Romm.

Students will also work with **David Hugo**, food service manager and chef at the Inn at Shelburne Farms. They will visit American Flatbread in Waitsfield where owner **George Schenk** will share his culinary skills and extensive political work to promote local and organic foods in the state of Vermont and



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throughout the US. “We’re psyched to work with George again this year,” says Romm. “He’s passionate about encouraging healthy and positive relationships between kids and the food they eat.”

This is the second year that Romm has offered an Encounter Week focused on cooking. “I love to cook,” says Romm, “and I want to encourage students to get into cooking good, local food – especially boys.”

This year seven of the nine VCS students enrolled in the cooking course are boys. Romm has also recruited the help of Sarah Soule, Director of Admissions and College Counseling at VCS. Soule also loves to cook and is excited to start the week by taking the students to King Street Youth Center where they will make a meal for kids in the Junior Senior Buddy Program in honor of National Mentoring Month (January).

Local food is an ongoing theme this year at Vermont Commons School. In the fall, the entire VCS community read *The Omnivore’s Dilemma* and devoted an entire day to learning about – and sampling – local foods. Next month, the Events Committee at VCS is launching a **Localvore Dinner Series** featuring guest speakers, student presentations, and a 4-course meal at local restaurants committed to serving local foods. The first event is on Wednesday, February 3<sup>rd</sup> at Penny Cluse Café in Burlington and features **Saleem Ali**, a professor at UVM’s Rubenstein School and author of *Treasures of the Earth: Need, Greed and a Sustainable Future*. VCS students participating in the “Farms to Barnes” Research and Service class will present a summary of their experience working at the new Sustainability Academy at Barnes Elementary School in Burlington to help encourage students and their families to eat more healthy, locally grown food. To learn more about the Localvore Dinner Series, please visit the Vermont Commons website at [www.vermontcommons.org/dinner-series](http://www.vermontcommons.org/dinner-series). The public is invited to attend.

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**About Vermont Commons School:** *Vermont Commons School is an independent day school for students in grades 7 – 12. The school offers a rigorous, college-preparatory curriculum that includes a focus on community service and experiential education. Vermont Commons School students experience a unique blend of academics and global emersion, master fundamental academic disciplines, grasp the profound interdependence of the natural and human systems they inhabit, and graduate with the values, knowledge, skills and commitment necessary to become ethical and engaged ecological citizens. For more information, please visit [www.vermontcommons.org](http://www.vermontcommons.org).*

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