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## Press Release

For immediate release  
January 16, 2009

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### Madeleine Kunin to Speak at Vermont Commons

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Madeleine Kunin, former governor of Vermont, will speak at Vermont Commons School at 10:30 am on Monday, January 19<sup>th</sup>. The community is invited to attend. Kunin is the only woman to have been governor of Vermont, and she served as the Deputy Secretary of Education and Ambassador to Switzerland under President Clinton. Her talk is part of a special week-long class at Vermont Commons called **Gender: Identity and Power**. According to instructor Sarah Bertucci, the course will focus on gender as it relates to students' lives and current events. "We'll start the week with the amazing opportunity to speak with Madeleine Kunin about her recent book, *Pearls, Politics, and Power*," notes Bertucci. "It will be an incredible treat for students to interact with Governor Kunin in a small group setting at Vermont Commons!"



The remainder of the week, students will examine gender and politics, particularly in light of the recent presidential election. "There's so much to discuss, from Hillary versus Obama to Sarah Palin as vice-presidential candidate to *Saturday Night Live* skits as social commentary," says Bertucci. In the latter part of the week, the class will examine issues closer to students' daily experiences. Student interests will also dictate the topics covered. Bertucci's goal in offering the course? "I hope the students will find themselves thinking of their world and their own identity with new insights and awareness."

Gender: Identity & Power is one of nine special week-long courses offered during Vermont Commons Winter Encounter Week program. Some of the other courses include: Winter Tracking, Cooking, Greening VCS,



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Winter Adventures I, II, and III , over-night, yurt-based adventures focused on a combination of snowshoeing, X-country skiing, ice climbing and extreme sledding). Two other VCS Encounter Week groups are traveling outside of Vermont for their Encounter Week experience. One group left today at 6am for a 9-day trip to the Sundance Film Festival in Park City, Utah. Another group left on Wednesday for an 11-day trip to Belize to study the ecology and geology of this tropical paradise. Below is an email the school received from the trip leader, instructor Mark Cline-Lucey.

After a rather uneventful flight, the Belize crew touched down in the tropics and knew right away that they are not in Kansas anymore. Things are wet and humid after days of rain. Skin is sticky and hair is curling into lion's manes. Beans for dinner, beans for breakfast, and a sweet night hike in between on which we saw an ocelot, as well as numerous spiders, bats, and other tropical nighttime critters. Since Joe is allergic to cats, we'll know if a jaguar is stalking us cause Joe will get stuffy.

Vermont feels several planets away, but we're thinking of you, hoping you're staying warm (it's 70 degrees here, a "cold snap" by Belizean standards) and wishing y'all amazing Encounter Weeks!

One Love,  
Mark, Jen & the Belize Crew"



Encounter Week is one of the defining features of a Vermont Commons education. More information about each 2009 Winter Encounter Week offering can be found in the WHAT'S NEW section of our website: [www.vermontcommons.org](http://www.vermontcommons.org)

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**About Vermont Commons School:** Vermont Commons School is an independent day school for college-bound students in grades 7 – 12. The school offers a rigorous, college preparatory curriculum that includes a focus on community service and experiential education. The mission of the Vermont Commons School is to provide a vision of education that crosses traditional boundaries and develops ecological citizenship, with the goal of empowering students with the knowledge, character, skills, and moral vision necessary to become responsible, pro-active members of the world community.

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