



VERMONT COMMONS SCHOOL

MOVING OUT OF THE CLASSROOM AND INTO THE WORLD

Press Release

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Saleem Ali Delivers Food for Thought

Dr. Saleem Ali, associate professor of environmental studies at UVM, delivered a thought-provoking talk Wednesday evening at Penny Cluse Café during the first event in the Localvore Dinner Series sponsored by Vermont Commons School. More than 40 people attended the event, including Vermont Commons faculty, staff, board members, parents, students, alumni parents, and friends of Vermont Commons School. VCS Board member Claudia Barber, of Shelburne, orchestrated an engaging evening complete



Peter Gilmore, Head of School at Vermont Commons School, with Dr. Saleem Ali of UVM at the first VCS Localvore Dinner.

with delicious local food and “food for thought,” including inspiring presentations by instructor Mark Cline Lucey and VCS seniors, Sophie Daigle and Elena Mudd, and guest speaker Dr. Saleem Ali.

Dr. Ali’s talk focused primarily on his new book, *Treasures of the Earth*, which grapples with the central question, “*Would the world be a better place if people curbed their desire for material goods?*” Dr. Ali contends that consuming resources is a good thing. He argues that while current environmental movements to buy local and measure one’s carbon footprint are valuable endeavors, we should not categorically exclude -- *or feel guilty about* -- consuming resources or even human greed. He gave examples of how greed and consumption often provide the financial means for developing countries to transition from dire poverty to a more sustainable economy. The discussion meandered from equations and environmentalism to the homogenization of US culture and the inclusion of organic produce at Wal-Mart. The audience seemed to appreciate Dr. Ali’s pragmatic perspective on large-scale solutions to economic problems and his sensitivity to eradicating poverty as we try to solve address the environmental challenges facing our world. It was a special evening with a truly remarkable individual.

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Two additional events are scheduled in the VCS Localvore Dinner Series. The next event is set for Thursday, March 11th at the Kitchen Table Bistro in Richmond. The guest speaker will be **Megan Camp**, program director and vice president of Shelburne Farms. Ms. Camp will talk about her work in Vermont and internationally to promote sustainable agriculture and communities. The public is invited to attend. For information and tickets, please visit www.vermontcommons.org/dinner-series.

***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.*

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