

JANUARY 17TH, 2014

TURTLE TRACKS

A WEEKLY EMAIL NEWSLETTER FOR THE VERMONT COMMONS SCHOOL COMMUNITY

Upcoming Events

January 17th-24th
Big Trips
Sundance & Belize

January 20th-24th
Winter
Encounter Week

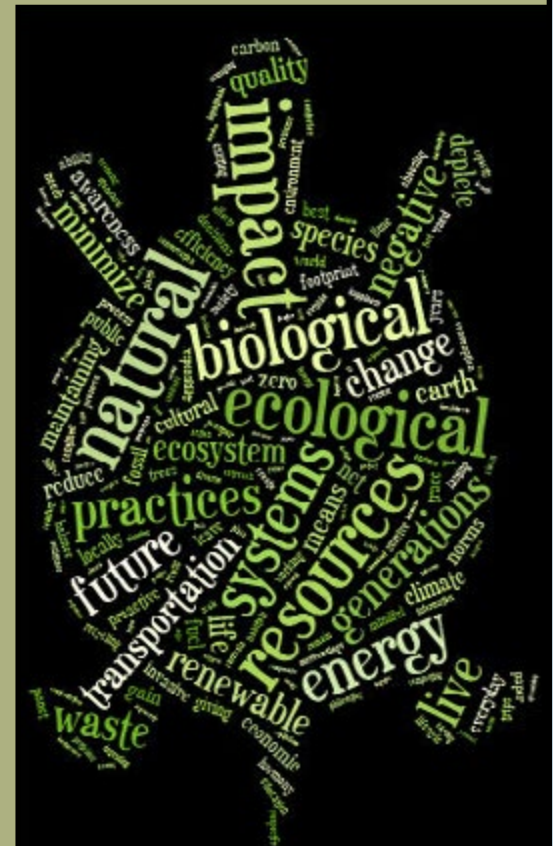
January 23rd
Encounter Week
Dinner Series

January 31st
Foolish Friday!

Results of the VCS Sustainability Survey *by Bradley Materick*

Two weeks ago during our Research & Service class presentations, the VCS Sustainability Committee presented the results of the Sustainability Survey that you all participated in recently. Our overall response rate was 31.6%, which is quite a high number given that most surveys are considered successful if they get a response rate of 5-15%. About 50% of our responses came from parents/guardians, about 30% from students, about 13% from employees, and about 7% from trustees. Here are some highlights from the results:

- 57% of respondents agreed that sustainability should be a high priority at VCS, while 26.6% agreed that sustainability should be pursued in some areas but that it shouldn't be a high priority. No one supported the statements that there are some areas where VCS should not pursue sustainability, or that we should not pursue sustainability at all.
- Only 10% of respondents were very satisfied with VCS's current level of sustainability. About 54% were either somewhat satisfied, somewhat dissatisfied, or very dissatisfied.
- Energy Use came out on top as the highest priority area for pursuing sustainability, with the other areas (Transportation, Water Use, Campus Design & Materials, Solid Waste Disposal, and Products We Use) being more or less equal in terms of priority.
- Some of the possible sustainability projects that were ranked highest included creating an efficient and effective system to enable and encourage carpooling, installing solar panels on the school, using sustainable design & construction methods during renovations, assessing the physical and mental health impacts of our campus, creating a more effective system for recycling and composting, and reducing our use of non-reusable/non-recyclable products.
- We took all of your answers to the question, "How do you define environmental sustainability?" and identified key words. We then made a Wordle using these key words...in the shape of a turtle! An image of our "turtle wordle" is included with this article, and we hope to hang up a large version soon!



Join the VCS Sustainability Committee: Version 2.0!

During the first semester of this year, the VCS Sustainability Committee included only the eleven students in Bradley's Research & Service class, "Launching the VCS Sustainability Initiative." Now that this class has come to an end, we are looking to diversify the Sustainability Committee to include members from our wider VCS community. It is Bradley's hope that a few students from his R&S class will have the time and interest to continue on the Committee, as their knowledge of the work we have done so far is extremely valuable. In addition, we would like to invite other students, parents, faculty and staff, and trustees to join the Committee in its next incarnation. If you are interested in joining the Committee, or if you have questions about what a Committee member's role would entail, please contact Bradley Materick (bmaterick@vermontcommons.org). The newly diversified Sustainability Committee will begin meeting on a regular basis next semester!



9th Graders Begin Collaboration with Credo Podcast Project

Inspired by Dr. Robert Lair's November visit and discussion about personal credos (see <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VhBOCDHTT0M>) the 9th grade Social Studies students pursued their interest in this topic by producing a series of audio podcasts for the Credo Podcast Project. Listen to their beautiful work here:

<http://vcs-ss9productions.blogspot.com>



VCS Hosts Families of First Prospective International Students *by Ben Wang*

VCS had the pleasure of hosting our first parents of prospective international students last Thursday. Susie Xi and Lotus Shi of China were accompanied by Suzanne Fox of Fox Intercultural Consulting, Portland Maine, for a tour of four schools through northern New England. Susie and Lotus shared with Ben Wang that they were “deeply impressed with the teachers’ passion, professionalism, and care for the students, and also with the students’ politeness, humility, and love of learning.” They were also moved by everyone’s calm self-confidence and clarity of being. Our community shined brightly as they visited classes, met with faculty and administration, and had dinner with VCS student Jordan Cannon’s family. A big thanks to everyone who helped welcome them!



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