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NOVEMBER 1ST, 2016

TURTLE TRACKS

A WEEKLY E-NEWSLETTER FOR THE VERMONT COMMONS SCHOOL COMMUNITY

UPCOMING EVENTS

November 2nd
Community Potluck

November 5th
SATs

November 5th
Volleyball State
Championships

November 9th
Early Dismissal - 11:45a
Pick-up - Noon

Community Potluck Tomorrow Evening

by Dexter Mahaffey

All Vermont Commons community members are invited to join together for a casual community potluck tomorrow, **Wednesday, November 3rd, starting at 5:30 p.m.** in the Commons Room.

This is the first of three evenings over the course of the year when we'll gather in this way. Included in the evening is food and friendship, a brief update on the state of the school, a conversation for the parents, and entertainment for students.



We look forward to seeing you and your family with us together as a community!



VCS Students Launch Pages for Prisoners: Please Donate Books!

by *Mark Cline Lucey*

Students in the Behind Bars Research & Service class have created a prison book collection drive. Pages for Prisoners is a project that collects and distributes books, board games and other needed materials to incarcerated people throughout New England. Every item you donate goes straight to a prison to help inmates further their education.

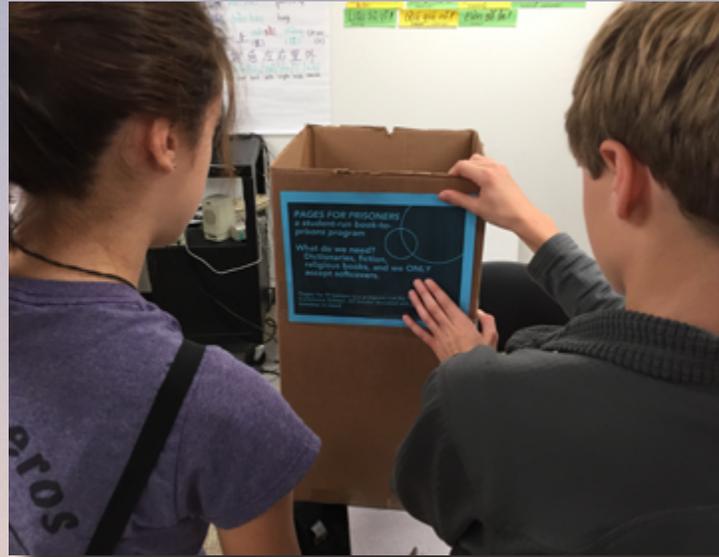
Why send books to prisoners? Today, the United States has the highest rate of incarceration in the world. Russia is a distant second, followed by Rwanda. We have 5% of the world's population and 25% of its prison population. Nearly 75% of state prison inmates did not complete high school. 65% are dealing with substance abuse or addictions. Roughly half have a serious mental health issue. Years spent behind bars does little to alleviate these challenges and deprives people of formal education and job experience.

Remember, most prisoners eventually leave prison. Hundreds of thousands of people are released from prison every year with the same problems that landed them in there, and generally those problems have worsened while in prison.

The answers to these problems is knowledge. Studies have overwhelmingly shown that prisoners who become more educated while incarcerated are [less likely to return to prison](#).

We cannot do it without you, so please dust off those old dictionaries and other books and bring them to the labeled book collection box in the lunchroom at the school! We will check, package and deliver every item that is donated.

Learn more at [our website](#).



NEEDED: Used Instruments for Re-Homing!

by *the VCS Music Department*

Do you have a guitar, an electric piano, a conga, or an amp that is gathering dust and not living up to its life's purpose? Do you feel a pang of guilt every time you glance their way? The Vermont Commons School Music Department can help!

We can provide a new home and renewed mission in the life of that instrument and teach your children to boot! What are we looking for?

- 10 Electric Pianos- hopefully with full-sized keys but weighed action is not necessary
- 10-15 Acoustic or Electric Guitars- Ideally in playing condition but need for re-stringing/set-up is fine
- Amplifiers
- 5-10 Ukuleles
- Percussion- Electronic drum kit, congas, djembes, bongos, maracas, xylophones, shakers, etc.
- Sheet Music- for voice or instrument

Please contact Matt Davide at mdavide@vermontcommons.org to talk about a donation and, remember, it is tax deductible! Thanks so much!



10 Days, 17 Peruvian Students

by *Adriana Comtois*

After spending 10 days with us, the Peruvian crew is back home. They made it safe and sound to Lima at midnight last Thursday, where eager parents were awaiting for their arrival. They had a long trip, traveling most of the day. Here, so many of us miss them already. They brought different angles to our class discussions, they introduced us to new flavors with their dishes, taught us how to dance, and laughed with us while singing bad karaoke. We became accustomed to their warmth and spontaneity, and they brought the best out of us as well.



I was very proud of this community to see how each student and faculty embraced their presence in the classroom, hallways and volleyball court, making them feel part of the VCS daily life, with all its excitement and uniqueness. I was truly impressed to see how many of our students stepped out of their comfort zones and engaged them in playing ping pong or were willing to try some salsa dancing. I heard so many students who take Chinese trying to speak Spanish!



My special gratitude goes to all the host families who very happily took care of these students and teachers during their stay, arranging their schedules and making accommodations in order for them to have a fantastic experience, which they did. While I was waiting in line with them to check-in, many reiterated to me that this was an experience that they will never forget.



After such fantastic visit, VCS is committed to establishing a more long-term relationship with this school. I will be visiting Colegio Santa Ana in the middle of November and I will meet with the director of the school to plan OUR visit to their school. More info on that soon!

6th Grade Joins Improv Class

by *Jory Hearst*

Susan's Improv class invited the 6th graders to join them on Friday, and they taught us all kinds of awesome games: "Wah!", "Hitchhiker", "Fortunately, Unfortunately", "Mustache", and more. We had a blast!!!!



The Commons Fund 2016-17

Donations are beginning to roll in! Thank you to our first donors.

Our goal you ask? \$150,000 and 100% Family Participation!

Won't you do what you can to support this?



#vcscommonsfund

#giveuntilithurtsjustalittle

Background Photo by Graham Byers '18

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