



MARCH 8, 2016

TURTLE TRACKS

A WEEKLY E-NEWSLETTER FOR THE VERMONT COMMONS SCHOOL COMMUNITY

UPCOMING EVENTS

March 10th
7th & 8th Grade
Parent Informational Night

March 16th
NO SCHOOL
Prof. Development Day

March 18th
End of Third Quarter

March 21st
Bring a Friend Day!

Second Evening of Readings!

Continuing from last week's coverage of the First Evening of Readings, the second edition took place this past Thursday evening in the Commons Room. Students with last names beginning with A-K read short stories, essays, and poems compiled during their Language Arts classes this year. Once again, our students drew tears, laughter, and awe from the crowd of community members, family and friends. Thanks to those who came out to support our students on these most spectacular Evenings of Readings!



Vermont Arts Council “Artists in Schools” Grant Inspires Budding Actors at Vermont Commons School *by Mary Hamilton, photos provided by Mary Hamilton & Sharon Panitch*

“Drama class is far more than building confidence and having fun”, says Heather Win, our new Dramatic Arts teacher. “Drama creates space to build empathy as students work to truly understand the feelings and motivations of characters. When I heard about the Brundibar production, I sought out the “Artists in Schools” grant through the Vermont Council on the Arts (VCA) in order to offer my students the rich experience of connecting more deeply to the characters, history, and impact of this beautiful piece of theatre.”

Heather received the grant and thus Trisha Denton, artistic director of Brundibar and founder of In Tandem Arts began work with the 6th and 7th grades. “Trisha’s work with our students was inspired and inspiring” continues Heather. So inspiring, in fact, that 4 students from the 6th and 7th grades went on to audition for Brundibar and will be performing in the upcoming production. During her residency, Ms. Denton shared the important historical context of Brundibar and led movement/acting exercises and discussions connected to Theatre of the Oppressed and social justice through theatre. A successful creative endeavor is a two-way street as Ms. Denton noted, “...in our dialogue around themes of oppression and social change, the students insights made a profound impact on my own instincts about Brundibar as a whole. This residency has brought so much meaning to the work on both sides.”

As a culmination of her residency, the Vermont Commons Middle School will take a field trip March 11th to see the matinee show and have the pleasure of watching their classmates perform.

Should you wish to attend the performance, *Brundibar* will be performed March 11-13 and March 18-20, 2016 at Contois Auditorium in the Burlington City Hall. Tickets are on sale through the Flynn Theater Box Office or by calling 802-86-FLYNN.



Vermont Commons School Receives Kudos from National Geographic

by Mary Hamilton

"Congratulations to Vermont Commons School and Taegen Yardley for the amazing "Vermont Battles for Elephants" video" says a card from Dan Beaupre, Executive Director of National Geographic's Geography Competitions and Student Experiences, in response to the much shared video created by Mark Cline Lucey and 7th grader Taegen Yardley. The card accompanied a host of educational materials from the magazine.

Taegen is just back from the World Wildlife Day 2016 Celebrations at the State Department in Washington, D.C. on March 2nd and at the United Nations in New York City on March 3rd where she continues her passion to protect elephants.

You can view the video at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zRM6y3XnezE>.

Images of Research & Service



Bring a Friend Day!

by Jill Strawbridge, photo by Amira Silverman '17

Our annual Bring a Friend Day is coming up on Monday, March 21st! Students are encouraged to invite a friend from outside our community to come hang out for the day. Please contact Jill either in person or by e-mail (jstrawbridge@vermontcommons.org) for more information.

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