

November 14, 2012

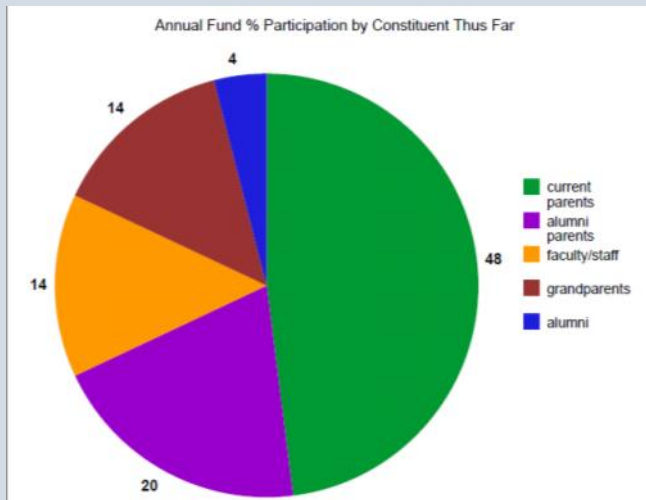
TURTLE TRACKS

A WEEKLY EMAIL NEWSLETTER FOR THE VERMONT COMMONS SCHOOL COMMUNITY

UPCOMING EVENTS

November 15	November 19-23	November 25	November 28	November 29
PACS Sponsored Coffee Hour 7:45-8:45 AM	Thanksgiving Vacation	Leunig's Fundraiser All Day	Noon Dismissal	Sibling Shadow Day

The Awesome Annual Fund Update! –by Mary Hamilton-Homer



We are off to a great start! **Thank you to all those who have made their gifts early.** Our Annual Fund Goal is a budgeted line item so the earlier we receive it, the more able we are to make budgetary decisions. Remember, these gifts help us give **your children** the best Vermont Commons experience possible!

Thus far, we have received 29 gifts. The graph below shows how those gifts breakdown in the community categories Alumni have not yet received their “ask,” so their percentage is low.

Coming Soon! **The Annual Fund Phonathon!** Help us reduce our calls (and thereby yours...) by pledging or making your donation now! Use the pledge envelope you received with your AF letter or go to the website and click on [Donate](#).

Classifieds



Seeking: Talented ARTISANS in our VCS Community. Join the 18+ craftspeople who are selling their wares at the VCS Artisan Fair on Saturday, December 8th, in the Commons Room from 10-4 PM! Contact Mary at extension 13, or mhamiltonhomer@vermontcommons.org. Spread the word!



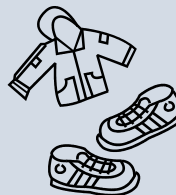
Help Heather Moore decide which pies to bake for the Artisan Craft Fair by [taking this quick survey](#). All proceeds from Heather's pies will directly benefit the Annual Fund.

PACS Coffee Hour—11/15



Please join us for the next PACS sponsored Coffee Hour held this Thursday, November 15th at 7:45 AM. This is a great opportunity to catch up with parents, faculty, and staff while enjoying light refreshments.

Lost and Found Items



The Lost and Found bins located in the lunch room, behind the ping pong table, will be cleaned out and donated to Goodwill before Winter Vacation.

Please take a look in the bins for your belongings and be sure to take them home before the end of the week.

Leunigs Big Trip Fundraiser—11/25



Mark your calendar for the Annual VCS Leunigs Fundraiser on November 25th! This is the best opportunity of the year to help VCS students earn money for scholarships toward trips abroad. All you need to do is show up and eat at Leunigs that day and "voila" a percentage of the bill will go to help VCS students who need it! Everyone knows how important the trips are to the VCS experience so let's all come out and support this great effort. Bring one, bring all to The Great VCS Leunigs Fundraiser!

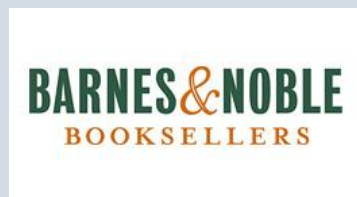
Sibling Shadow Day—11/29



The Vermont Commons School is hosting our annual Sibling Shadow Day on Thursday, November 29th. Brothers and sisters of current students and alumni, in grades five and older, are invited to spend the day at our school, attending classes and experiencing a "day in the life" of VCS! There will be a special sibling green gray competition, too! To RSVP, please contact Sarah Soule, ssoule@vermontcommons.org.

Special thanks to current ninth graders, Nick Sears and Anna Leffler, siblings of Mitch '14 and Tim '12, who suggested that there be a sibling shadow day when they were in the 6th grade!

Help Us Help Others This Holiday Season! –by Cara Simone



Buy a Cheese factory Cheesecake for the holidays, and we will donate 100% of the proceeds to the Hurricane Relief Effort.

At Vermont Commons School, we listened with great sadness as the devastating effects of Super storm Sandy were made known. After Hurricane Irene, we understand the importance of helping out. Vermonters and folks from out of state helped us rebuild, and we're happy that the VCS community is so enthusiastic about helping others in the wake of Sandy.



Through our Barnes & Noble Bookfair, we will be selling Cheesecake Factory Cheesecakes. Please consider buying a cheesecake by using the form on the last page of Turtle Tracks. 100% of all proceeds will go to the Hurricane relief effort. We're hoping to raise \$2,000 by selling 250 cheesecakes. That's a lot of cheesecake! Please forward this to friends and family who might be interested. Orders and checks/cash are due on December 9th, the day of our bookfair at the Barnes & Noble in South Burlington.



Check out more details at the Vermont Commons School Facebook Event for our Bookfair on December 9th and online from December 9th-14th. (10-20% of all Book and Nook sales will benefit the Hurricane relief effort, too!)

Use the school code 10872497 when making a B&N purchase in the store or online during the above dates. We ask for you to share this code and cheesecake order form with all of your friends and family! Thank you in advance for your support.

Community Engagement Action Committee –by Laury Shea



One task the CEAC has been working on this fall is to find ways to enrich Programming at VCS through the use of family connections and resources. To that end, look for an email survey in the next few weeks that will further explore and garner interest from our parent community.

Some specific requests from faculty that have come include: the need for a fluent Spanish speaker who has lived in Spain or Latin America for an extended period of time to hold conversations with students and someone who has played soccer and can discuss the differences between the Latin and European style of play (this could be done in English).

Also parents/community members with expertise/experience in: psychoanalysis, the Occupy movement, feminist issues, LGBT issues, oral storytelling, Native American spokespersons (a member of the Abenaki tribe, for instance), and theater.

If you have expertise, experience or connections in these areas, (or other ideas or suggestions) please contact Laury Shea (mom to Nora and Mason Hill) at boblaury@aol.com or at 899-3743. THANK YOU!!!

Board Corner: Guiding Themes of VCS Board Trustees

–by Craig Heindel, *VCS Trustee, 2007-present*

There are some common themes that have guided the decisions, activities and thoughts of the Trustees at VCS, at least since my involvement began on the Board in 2007. First and foremost, we strive to advance the school's mission. VCS is a remarkable place, so an important principle for Trustees is to foster those



Craig and family in a fire-tower in the Adirondacks (Ruth, VCS 2006, Science Instructor 2010-12; Naomi, VCS 2003; Judy; Craig).

qualities. For me, some of VCS's most important and unique characteristics are the many outdoor experiences which provide opportunities for our students (and faculty, families and Trustees) to develop leadership skills; our hands-on engagement with local, regional and global communities; the chances that VCS provides for students to experience activities and ways of thinking that are totally new to them; and the opportunity for our students to be immersed in a community of peers, educators and families who honors and prize intellectual curiosity.

The Trustees also pay strong attention to the long-term health of the school, while at the same time participating in day-to-day work and helping with practical tasks – which we all do by serving on committees, volunteering at school events, and listening and talking to all of the elements of our school community. Another guiding theme is to be prudent regarding the school's finances.

Perhaps the most important guiding theme for the Trustees is mostly unspoken and unwritten – it's our strong feeling of collegiality. We listen to each other, we learn from each other's ideas, we challenge each other to engage more deeply, we trust each other to have the school's best interests at heart – and we enjoy the time we spend together advancing and nurturing a school and a community that we passionately believe in.

Learning Globally, Acting Locally at VCS!

Tenth grade students at Vermont Commons School are learning about Early Modern History in their Social Studies class – but not in the usual way.

“I decided to change things up,” said teacher Mark Cline Lucey. “After eight years of teaching this same class about global history between 1500-1800, I wanted to bring the curriculum to a deeper level.”



Vermont Commons School has a mission to “engage student with the world” and a vision for “connecting its classrooms to its community.” Inspired by the school’s Strategic Plan which calls for global immersion and community-based learning, Cline Lucey decided to enroll his sophomore class in the Challenge 20/20 program of the National Association of Independent Schools. This program connects classrooms around the world to collaborate on addressing important global issues.

“I thought about our curriculum and the importance of germs in shaping world history in the Age of Exploration,” said Cline Lucey. “So I signed us up for the Challenge 20/20 topic of Global Infectious Diseases. In early

September I received word that we had been partnered with the International School Suva in Fiji – and we were off and running!”

After introducing themselves via video to their counterparts across the world, the nine Vermont Commons sophomores started digging in to the history and current status of major global infectious diseases. While reading Jared Diamond’s *Gun’s, Germs & Steel* about the role of diseases in European exploration and conquest, the students researched and presented on modern-day killers such as malaria, tuberculosis, and AIDS, and even local threats like Eastern Equine Encephalitis and West Nile Virus.

Most impactful has been the local service element. Challenge 20/20 asks that classrooms become involved with “local solutions to global problems.”

In September, Cline Lucey contacted the Burlington-based Sudan Development Foundation (SUDEF). SUDEF was formed in 2007 by Sudanese resettled refugee Abraham Awolich. As a small but growing foundation, SUDEF “partners with local villages in rural South Sudan to develop projects that sustainably improve the quality of life through health, education and economic development.” The health clinics they have built help a population of over 25,000 South Sudanese in eleven villages to survive outbreaks of malaria, cholera and meningitis. “Here was the perfect community partner for our work,” noted Cline Lucey. “A small, locally founded organization working to address infectious diseases internationally. And because they are small and underfunded, they have clear needs that my students can really help with.”

Working together with Peter Keny and Julie Elmore at SUDEF, the Vermont Commons students are filming and producing a PSA that will drive a web-based, social media campaign to get the word out about SUDEF’s work, and raise the funding that will purchase materials and supplies for the clinics in South Sudan. Students will also capture the stories of Burlington’s resident South Sudanese refugees and do some grant writing.



“This class has been invigorating for me,” says Nora Hill, a student from Jericho. “The opportunity to help others and to hear Peter’s story has been inspirational and adds to my own personal drive. Meanwhile, their student partners in Fiji are working hard to address issues of local waterborne diseases.

Through a collaborative web blog, the two classrooms are exchanging research and creative ideas, as well as getting to know each other through Facebook.

BARNES & NOBLE

BOOKSELLERS

Customer Information:

Customer Name: _____	Customer Phone: _____
Pick Up Date: _____	Pick-Up Time: _____ AM/PM

Store Information:

Today's Date: _____	Order Taken By: _____
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Item Description	Quantity	Price	Sub-Total
Godiva Double Chocolate Cheesecake		\$40.00	
Original Cheesecake		\$40.00	
Red Velvet Cheesecake		\$40.00	
Dutch Apple Cheesecake*		\$40.00	
Cranberry Bliss Bar - Tray		\$10.95	
Floureless Chocolate Torte		\$35.00	
Assorted Cupcakes:		6 for \$11.25	

*Seasonal availability

Total

Texas, if applicable, not included

Special Instructions: (Please Print)

In store use only:

Date ordered from U.S. Foodservice: _____	
Date customer received order: _____	