

November 1, 2011

# TURTLE TRACKS

A WEEKLY EMAIL NEWSLETTER FOR THE VERMONT COMMONS SCHOOL COMMUNITY

## UPCOMING EVENTS

November 4	November 6	November 17	November 21-25	November 30
Grandparents Day—Noon Dismissal	Admissions Open House @ 1 PM	PACS Coffee Hour 7:45-9 AM	Thanksgiving Break	Noon Dismissal

## Grandparents Day 11/4



Grandparents Day is fast approaching! Let us know if we do not have your grandparents information on file as we will be sending out invitations this month. Please log onto ParentsWeb and fill out the Grandparent Webform. Also note that if you would like to invite a favorite aunt, uncle or adult friend you may do so. This day is a half day and dismissal will be at 12 PM.

Please contact Sarah Judd, Development Director, with any questions at 802-865-8084 ext. 30 or [sjudd@vermontcommons.org](mailto:sjudd@vermontcommons.org).

## Admissions Open House 11/6



Please invite your friends who might be interested in learning more about our school, to attend our [Admissions Open House](#) Sunday, November 6 at 1pm.

Attendees will learn about our community by touring the school, hearing about our programs, and meeting current students and faculty. This is an excellent opportunity for families to meet students, teachers, and the Head of School, Peter Gilmore. To register please contact Sarah Soule, Director of Admissions, at 802-865-8084 ext. 27 or [ssoule@vermontcommons.org](mailto:ssoule@vermontcommons.org).

## Barnes & Noble Fundraiser 12/11



Please join us on December 11th for our very own Barnes and Noble Bookfair. Throughout the day we will have a choral concert, open mic, poetry readings and children's story telling. VCS will have a welcome table hosted by parents to talk with anyone interested in the school. If you make a purchase, in any Barnes and Noble store, on Dec. 11th and present our school code we will receive between 10-20% of the sale. If you cannot make it to a store on the 11th, you may make purchases online from Dec. 11-16th by visiting [bn.com/bookfairs](http://bn.com/bookfairs) and entering our school code. The proceeds of this event will benefit our winter Trips Program. **Our school code is 10569150.** Thank you for the support!

## College Corner –by Sarah Soule



Today, November first, is an especially meaningful day in college counseling as Liz Breslend and I have just submitted the first round of transcripts and recommendations to the colleges and universities that our seniors are applying to early action and early decision. Vermont Commons utilizes an on line partner, Naviance, to help us with the college counseling process and our school is in its second year of using this invaluable program. Naviance has enabled us to greatly streamline the process of submitting materials to colleges and universities and allows us to “go paperless” as everything is sent electronically.

VCS’s Naviance account includes data on each of our graduates and their college acceptances, denials, and waits list decisions for the classes of 2005-2011. Our seniors, as they research colleges and universities on Naviance, can individually compare their own record and standardized test results to those of other Vermont Commons students. The information is completely anonymous but it gives accurate and up to date data as a context for comparison purposes. Our juniors, and their parents, will be introduced to Naviance in early February after the conclusion of the first semester.

In the meantime, our juniors, seniors, and other interested students and parents, are strongly encouraged to meet with the representatives from visiting colleges and universities who come to VCS. In a future issue of Turtle Tracks I will summarize a list of those institutions that visited our school this fall and share an update of those that offer admission to our Class of 2012.

## Model UN Conference –by Mark Cline Lucey



On Saturday, sixteen VCS students attended the Model United Nations conference at Burlington High School! Acting as delegates representing China, Egypt, Germany, Russia and North Korea, these future international diplomats served on committees that worked to solve world problems ranging from hunger to education to nuclear proliferation. They debated and collaborated to create and pass resolutions that were so good it made one wish the actual UN could cooperate and problem solve like this crew!



In attendance: **Seniors** Eliot Crawford, Christian Frey, Josh Minot, Phineas Schlossberg; **Juniors** Justin Decatur, Gabe Mantegna; **Sophomores** Seth Evans -Diffenderfer, Emil Koenig, Peter Larsen, Mitch Leffler; **Freshmen** Jordanna Dulaney, Eli Hulse, Adrian Kelly, Dyson Lord; **8th Graders** Eli Hinds, Nick Sears.



This is the third year that VCS has been sending delegations to Model UN conferences. Dartmouth Model UN takes place in early April and we plan to send the biggest delegation allowed by the conference organizers: 25 students! Through participation, the students learn to debate and discuss important topics, they get interested in world issues, and they meet other high school students from around the northeast. Best of all, they are getting some of the global immersion that VCS strives to provide every student!



## Research & Service in the Community –by Mark Cline Lucey



Lots of exciting things are happening in Research & Service this semester! In addition to teaching English to new immigrants from Nepal each Friday, the Changing Face of Vermont Research & Service class has been working with English Language Learners at the Sustainability Academy, a public elementary school in Burlington. Working together with these students who have all immigrated recently to Vermont, the VCS class is collaborating on three different service projects. Elsa, Jordan, Shannon & Sophia are all helping to run a clothing drive for the Vermont Refugee Resettlement Program (please support them by bringing in warm winter clothes!). Bella, Emil & Seth are working with a group of 3<sup>rd</sup> grade students to make a promotional video for the Sustainability Academy. And Camille, Katharina, Leslie, Lex, Maggie, Sarah and Tim are working with students on a photo documentary project that will be displayed in the elementary school. This is service embedded within service, as we are doing these service projects while helping the ELL students learn to speak better English!



We also recently had the amazing opportunity to meet with Peter Keny who arrived in Burlington in 2001 as one of the resettled “Lost Boys” from Sudan. Keny, along with Julia Elmore, now works with the Sudan Development Foundation, a local organization that is raising money to build health clinics in Sudan. The two of them spent two hours talking to us about the history and current situation in Sudan, and Keny told us his own story of fleeing from his village at the age of six. Find out more about their amazing work at [www.sudef.org](http://www.sudef.org).



Our work with these new Americans, old and young, has been raising lots of questions for the students about international politics and cultural pluralism, which we have been researching and discussing on our “off” days when we are at VCS. What was/is the situation in Sudan, Somalia, Nepal and other places that have caused people to flee as refugees? How does the international system of refugee resettlement work? What are the challenges and opportunities for a refugee resettlement city like Burlington?

## Need Help with Yard Work?



Been looking at all those fallen leaves in your backyard and wondering how they will possibly get raked and bagged? Or that newly delivered cord of wood and dreading stacking it? Worry not! Belize-bound VCS students are eager to work and hoping to raise money for their January trip. For \$10/student/hour they will have your yard cleaned up and ready for winter! If you're interested in this offer, please email Mark at [mark@vermontcommons.org](mailto:mark@vermontcommons.org). Thank you!

## Winter Clothes Needed –by Mark Cline Lucey



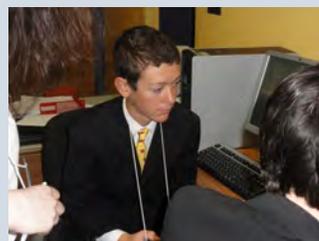
Winter is fast approaching, and most of us feel incredibly fortunate to have warm homes and warm clothes to survive the chilly months. There is a need for warm coats, hats, mittens, boots and snow pants for kindergarten students at the Sustainability Academy elementary school in Burlington. The kindergarten teachers there have started an innovative and exciting new Outdoor Classroom program. Every Friday, the students have class outside ALL DAY - rain, sleet, snow. Some of the kindergarten students are in need of warm clothing to make this outdoor learning possible. Please help us help our newest neighbors! Please bring any donations to Mark's office.

# Housekeeping Announcement



We are cleaning up the lunchroom this Friday and part of this initiative will involve clearing the tops of lockers. In an effort to keep this space clutter free we ask that you store your school supplies, books, clothing, etc. inside your locker or take home these belongings. Thank you for helping to keep the lunch room clean!

## This Week in Photos



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