



The High School View

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Project Vine maintains community despite distance

BY SARAH CREATO

While the Martha's Vineyard Regional High School (MVRHS) has experienced many changes as a result of remote learning due to COVID-19, the alternative education program Project Vine has been finding ways to remain interconnected, which is an aspect of the program that is essential to its mission.

Project Vine consists of 30-48 students between 9th and 12th grade who are provided with the opportunity to learn through alternative instructional strategies while also participating in stimulating, collaborative activities.

"The teachers' main priority for their Project Vine students is connecting with them," said math teacher Ellen Muir. "The focus is on community and getting to know the students."



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Project Vine students gathered around a table last December to decorate gingerbread houses.

In comparison to mainstream education, Project Vine's educators are more collaborative with each other when it comes to their shared group of students. "We work as a team," said history teacher Joel Graves. "We're always talking about our shared pool of students, and we work as a unit. If somebody's not suc-

cessful in English, they might be doing something good in math, in history, and we can pick each other's brains."

Before the transition to remote learning, Project Vine had the goal of organizing one community-based activity per month. Some of these activities included an overnight retreat to Penikese Island, a

cornhole tournament and barbecue fundraiser, and a cooking competition based on the television show Chopped, where the proceeds are donated to the Island Food Pantry. Although many of these traditions are currently unable to happen, teachers have found ways to host some of these events safely.

The annual Island Lore storytelling event, for example, where seniors research Island history and write short stories based on it, occurred over Zoom with a record attendance of 40 people. English teacher and department chair Dani Charbonneau found a silver lining in the new format. "I think for some students, [participating on Zoom] was easier than standing in front of a crowd with a microphone," she said.

Mr. Graves feels that Project Vine holds an advantage over mainstream education in terms of sustaining community. "I think we have a huge, unfair advantage as compared to the rest of the adults in this building, given that when the year started, we already knew all of our kids. So it wasn't like I had a room full of strangers that I had to try to figure out who [they] were and how to teach [them] via Zoom," he said. "The fact that we're able to continue to keep kids

involved was because we already built those relationships with them ahead of time. Whereas for mainstream teachers, every year you get a new batch of kids."

Junior Marsha Stewart said, "Project Vine is like my second family. We all have a friendship with one another, since we are a small group," she said. "I couldn't be more happy to be a part of the family, and I'm glad to see how far we've come."

According to Ms. Charbonneau, it's the students themselves that make Project Vine unique. "It's the people who are part of it and who have chosen to be in Project Vine that help distinguish it," she said. "Most of them weren't really big fans of high school for one reason or another. There's not a unifying factor as to what everybody disliked, so we try to make the experience of being part of Project Vine feel better for those people." **HSV**

Holiday plans shift due to pandemic

BY JULIA SAYRE AND MARIA CLARA LACERDA

With the upcoming holiday season on the horizon, students and faculty at Martha's Vineyard Regional High School (MVRHS) are being challenged to alter their annual traditions. Due to COVID-19, visiting extended family by traveling cross-country, or even across a town line, has become controversial and possibly dangerous.

While various aspects of Thanksgiving—from grocery shopping to watching the Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade—are going to differ from past years in hope of mitigating the Coronavirus, students and teachers are finding alternative ways to celebrate in order to keep it meaningful.

Senior Sophie Nevin typically drives out of state to visit extended family every other

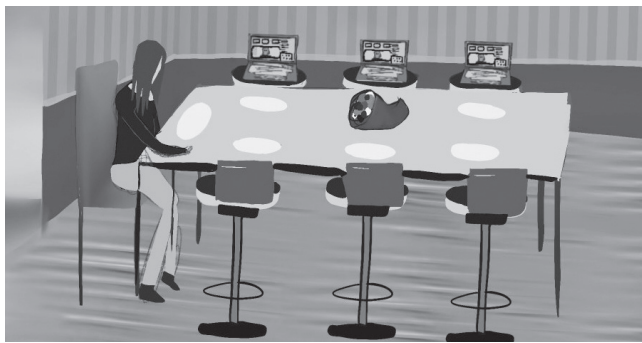


ILLUSTRATION BY OLIVIA MACPHERSON

Thanksgiving, but this year she'll be staying home. "It makes me sad [to not celebrate with these family members], because we only do it every other year," she said, "so I don't usually get to go and visit them. I'm kind of upset that I'm missing out on it."

Sophomore Teagan Myers spends Christmas with his grandmother every other year, but the only way to see her now is through a screen. "[My family and I] Facetime my Grammie a lot, so that's how

I'll be keeping in touch with her this year," he said.

Junior Lila Mikos takes a more old-fashioned approach to connect with her grandparents throughout the year, which she'll continue through the holidays. "I love to write letters to my grandparents," she said. "I feel like they never get mail like that anymore. I'll probably write a letter to them and send them a little gift that has to do with Thanksgiving."

Others, however, have been struggling with their inability

to see family in person. English department chair Christine Ferrone feels as though talking through a screen just isn't the same. "When you are Zooming with a bunch of people, it's hard to have intimate or meaningful conversations, and at times it can be awkward," she said. "I think what I'll do is call individual family members, so we can be attentive to each other as opposed to being on a big Zoom with everyone."

One positive to staying home for the holidays is avoiding the exhaustion that often accompanies traveling and time spent with extended family. History teacher Leigh Fairchild-Coppoletti said, "For Thanksgiving, we usually keep it pretty simple and stay here on the Island. It's a nice time to spend with immediate family and have a quiet, thankful, and restful experience." **HSV**

National Honors Society Food Drive

Students at Martha's Vineyard Regional High School are selected annually to be inducted into National Honor Society (NHS) due to their academic achievement, character, service, and leadership. Last February NHS held a fundraiser at Cronig's Market to raise money for the Island Food Pantry. Due to the Coronavirus, NHS is unable to fundraise in person this year. They are instead organizing a Go-Fund-Me by NHS co-



Open 'camera' app on iPhone or Android to be automatically redirected to Island Food Pantry Go-Fund-Me link.

president Zach Smith and treasurer Nate Porterfield. **HSV**

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