



VILLAGE VOICES

QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER FOR THE VILLAGE CHARTER SCHOOL • ISSUE 01 • OCTOBER 22, 2015

Education should consist of a series of enchantments, each raising the individual to a higher level of awareness, understanding, and kinship with all living things.

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DRUMMING WITH BENJIE

Come get your groove on with Benjie! This class is loud and fun. Each week we will work on new rhythms, exploring world drums and world beats! No previous experience required. Sign-up sheets are hanging on the announcement board outside the office. Turn forms into the office.

DAY: Tuesdays | **TIMES:** 3:00-3:30pm

(We will start with a combined class and add a second class from 3:30-4:00pm if there are enough students.)

DATES:

Nov. 3-Dec. 15

GRADES: 1st-8th

COST: \$50



CALENDAR

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 30
Dia de los Muertos Celebration

FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 6
Picture Day

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 19
Elsie's Class Play

NOVEMBER 23-27
Thanksgiving Break

DEC 22-JAN 1
Winter Break

INFORMATION & ANNOUNCEMENTS

PICTURE DAY: Lisa Dragna (former VCS parent) will be taking individual and class pictures again this year. There is nothing to turn in on picture day — you will receive an order form with the proofs.

ABSENCES: Parents are notifying the teacher instead of the office when their child is absent. The school office should be notified of a child's absence either by phone or email.



DIA DE LOS MUERTOS (DAY OF THE DEAD)

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 30, 6:30pm

The Day of the Dead is a worldwide celebration that honors the lives of loved ones who are no longer with us and gives us an opportunity to remember our ancestors.



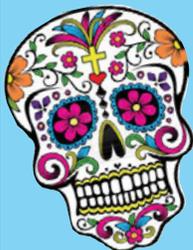
Join us on Friday, October 30, 6:30pm in remembrance of yours. Everyone is welcome to dress in traditional skeleton attire and/or to bring a family photo or offering of some kind to include on our community altar. Small, sweet snacks and fruit will be offered.

Each class is busy creating special altars and crafts to decorate and celebrate. If you can contribute, our communal event needs a few items and snacks to do the tradition justice. Please drop all donations at the office:

- Marigolds
- Sunflowers
- Gourds
- Squash
- Pomegranates
- Oranges
- Pumpkin seeds
- Pan de muertos
- LED votives + candles
- Almond milk
- Slow cookers

Contact Danielle Feliciano
dnefelciano@gmail.com

with questions.
Gracias!
Hast pronto!



FUNDRAISING: NOTES FROM THE FOUNDATION

Welcome to the 2015-2016 school year! I hope I've had the chance to meet most of you, but in case not, I have Cooper in Miss Barnum's class and Olivia in Miss Malika's. This is my fifth year at Village and my third as Foundation Chair. The Foundation is the fundraising entity of our independent charter school. I'm excited to be working with all of you again on such an important mission: the financial stability of our remarkable school. In the *Voices*, I'll be sharing ideas, updates and inspirations. I thought I'd kick off the year with a list of some of the things that make the Village such a special place for our children to learn and grow.

Things we love about being an INDEPENDENT charter school:

1. We get to handpick our own amazing staff.
2. Our teachers have tremendous flexibility in how they present curriculum, so our classrooms are full of magic and wonder.
3. Our teachers, board and staff get to determine our class size and configuration EACH year based on the needs of OUR students.
4. The school district cannot just randomly decide to move our campus.
5. Our Board of Directors is our governing body. That means that our Board and OUR community make the big decisions. Dependent charters typically have a site council that answers and reports to their school district's Board.

Did you know that in exchange for all this wonderful freedom and autonomy, we're responsible for expenses that dependent charter schools don't have to bear? We pay rent for this wonderful new campus home. We also pay more for our employees' health and welfare benefits, as we're not able to take advantage of the large group plans offered to district employees. In addition, independent charters typically receive less funding from state and federal sources (such as Block Grant Funding). In many cases, we receive about half of what dependent K-8 schools will receive per student.

As most of you know by now, we cover this difference with our annual fundraising campaign. Our Parent Giving Program (PGP) is THE very most critical component of our fundraising efforts. Have you made your pledge? We ask that families consider pledging \$125 per month for each student enrolled at Village. If each family were able to participate at that level, our budget concerns would nearly evaporate. We know, however, that this isn't possible for all families. What we know IS possible, however, is 100 PERCENT participation from every family in our community! If you haven't done it already, PLEASE take some time to consider what is manageable for your family and start the process today.

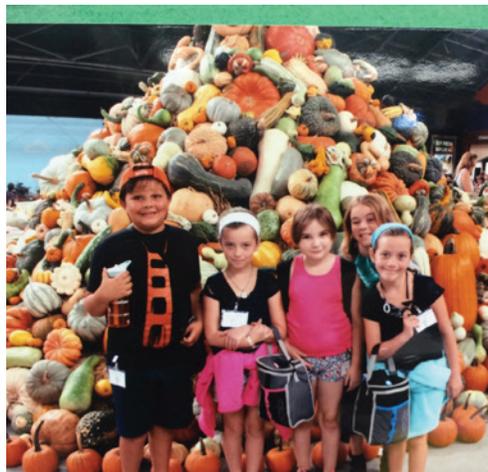
Thank you,
Ashley Hamlett, Foundation Chair

Please don't hesitate to be in touch with me with questions or inspirations of your own at ashley@perfectlyharmless.com or 707.545.7590. Looking forward to a year of working together!



HEIRLOOM FESTIVAL

In September, our whole school joined the **Pure Food Revolution** and attended the 2015 National Heirloom Expo at the Sonoma County Fairgrounds. They joined a massive assembly of pure food enthusiasts, talented home gardeners, farmers, school groups and leaders in the food industry. This is “not-for-profit” event, donated all funds above cost to school gardening education and other sustainable food programs. Our kids had a great time and got a great education to boost and enhance their understanding of sustainable farming and pure foods. Take a look at the Garden Project our middle schoolers are doing (page 4) to mirror these ideals!



PARENTS' PLACE:

ANNOUNCEMENTS AND INFORMATION FROM THE PARENT ASSOCIATION

PA Contacts:

PA Chair: Lauren Kushins, lcyxprs@aol.com

Foundation Chair: Ashley Hamlett, ashley@perfectlyharmless.com

Festival Chair: Danielle Felciano, dnfelciano@gmail.com

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Voices Graphic Designer: Alicia Feltman, llunabelle@gmail.com

A Note from the PA

We are off to a great start of the year! What a special community we have here at the Village! Our new site is quickly becoming our “home” as we make it our own by building a new sandbox and planting our gardens. In addition, the children are joyfully reporting about both their classrooms and field trips. And soon our first festival will be upon us with Dia de Los Muertos on October 30th. (If you would like to help with the festival, please contact me, Danielle Felciano, or let your classroom teacher know.)

I wanted to share a quick reminder that all are welcome to our PA meetings on the 2nd Wednesday of each month, from 5:30-6:30pm. We will soon be announcing a date for our Parent Volunteer Training, so keep an eye out in the upcoming bulletin.

Lastly, thank you to all the parents who have stepped forward to welcome and include a new parent and/or child to our Village. Remember your first year here and who made that special connection for you? It feels good to give back to others and to model this for our children. What makes us special here at VCS is our striving towards our best selves and modeling this for our kiddos. Thank you for being such a lovely community!

Warmly,
Lauren Kushins,
(Ella and Micah’s mom)

MRS. CARTER + MRS. MONTROSE'S MIDDLE-SCHOOL CLASS & THE VILLAGE GARDEN PROJECT

The Village Garden Project is off to a fun and successful start. The goal of the project is to produce organic vegetables, herbs and flowers year-round for the community to enjoy.

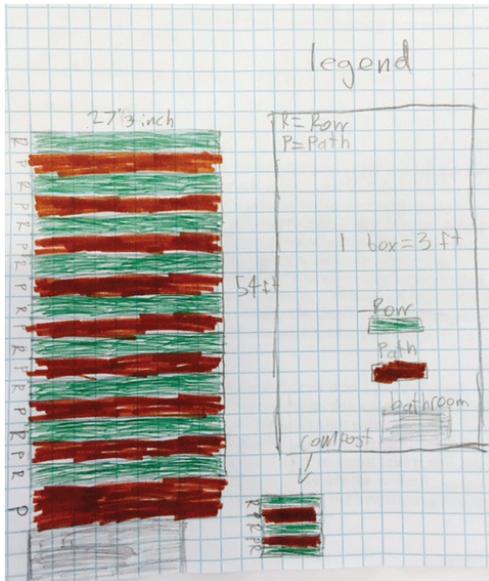
Our class just completed the design process, and we ready to get our hands dirty digging and planting. We used math skills, research skills, engineering, drawing and group work skills to get our designs together. Each student had a role in the design process:

GROUP #1: PLANTER BOXES

This group measured three planter boxes and drew a map with labeled measurements, including the area and volume. Then they chose herbs, medicines and flowers from gardening books and arranged them based on size in their drawings. (Check out the 3 planter boxes when you enter the school)!

GROUP #2: ARCHITECTS

This group measured the garden space and drew it (to scale) on a piece of graph paper, including walkways, planting beds, compost area, tool area, and water sources. Then they used stakes and string to stake out the garden spaces.



GROUP #3: COMPOST

This group created the compost area for our garden space by mapping out the space in the garden and staking out the space.

GROUP #4: PLANTS

This group made a list of the plants that will go into the beds and did seasonal research into vegetables that do well in this climate during different times of the year. They surveyed the other classes for their input.

GROUP #5: IRRIGATION

This group worked with the Architects to see how the garden beds are staked out and measured how much irrigation tubing we will need to purchase to cover each bed. Each bed is 3 feet across and will require 2 drip tubes running the length of it. (There are 9 beds.)

GROUP #6: ATTRACTING INSECTS

This group worked as a team to see the maps of all the groups and then chose perennial plants to go at the head and foot of each garden bed to attract beneficial insects such as butterflies and ladybugs.

Onward: We will continue to work on the project throughout the year. For our next phase we need, ASAP:

- wheelbarrows (2)
- pitchforks (flat ones-9)
- metal rakes (3)
- shovels (5)
- We will also need many bales of straw (20)
- wood chips

If you have any of these items or would like to purchase as a donation to the project, we would be grateful.

Thanks for your support! The students are enjoying watching our progress and are getting some great, real-world learning!

It takes a village to build a garden!

Thanks,

Mrs. Carter

Nancymetzgercarter@gmail.com





FORT ROSS OVERNIGHT FIELD TRIP

Fort Ross is a California State Historic Park showcasing a historic Russian-era fort compound that has been designated National Historic Landmark status. Located eleven miles north of Jenner on California Highway One, Fort Ross is surrounded by sandy beaches, panoramic coves, and redwood forests, with breathtaking views of the Pacific Ocean. At the

beginning of October, this was the site of a special overnight field trip for Elsie and Miss Barnum's 2nd through 6th-graders and many supportive parents, who got to assume historic Russian identities and role play amongst the structures and exhibits, bringing to life the former Imperial Russian settlement, early California Ranch era, and Kashaya territory. Read

on for student and teacher accounts of the experience and click below to view all of the photos from their trip. (Thank you, Village mom Opal for the amazing pictorial account!)

<http://opalmomentsphotography.zenfolio.com/fortross>
Password: fortross





ELSIE'S CLASS: WRITINGS ON FORT ROSS

Memories of an Adventure into the Past for Ms. Elsie and Ms. Barnum's classes,

as recounted by **Bella Reyes and Millie Munson**

In the morning, when the sun was fighting the fog, we arrived by the misty sea. There was a soft, gray sky, and the ground was covered in morning dew. As we walked over the moist hill, the ocean roared against the rocky cliffs. This is where our adventure started.

We hiked up to the colony, our home for the next seven years. (Two days, really.) We split into five different groups: Hunters, Cooks, Artisans, Militia, and Gardeners. We ate the remains of our lunches and raised the flag with pride.

After a grand welcoming ceremony, we headed to our jobs. While the Artisans painted wooden spoons and eggs, the Cooks began preparing a snack and dinner. The Militia did marching drills and learned to load muskets. The Gardeners planted broccoli, beets, spinach, and cabbage; and made a scarecrow. The Hunters went fishing. In all, they caught 15 crabs and 3 dead jellyfish. After a busy couple of hours, the Cooks served a snack of bread, cheese, nuts, and fruit. It certainly filled our empty stomachs. The Hunters were still fishing, so a few Cooks delivered the snack.

After our snack, all of Mrs. Elsie's students practiced their secret skit in the chapel. When dinner-time came, the Cooks made a really delicious meal. Russian borscht, toasty bread, green beans, potatoes, and freshly churned butter. But it didn't end there! Bright orange pumpkin porridge topped it off perfectly—a great way to finish our day.

The sun began to fall behind the hills. It became cold once more. We took a hike to the edge of a cliff. The sunset on the cliff was very colorful—pink, yellow, and orange. The color swirled and merged into something astounding. After the sun had set, we all headed back to the chapel, where Mrs. Elsie's students performed their no-longer-secret skit. Afterwards, all of the groups split apart and went to bed.

It was about an hour later when the Cooks woke up for night watch. All the groups drank tea, ate cookies, and did some sort of unique activity. The Cooks made candles, the Artisans did watercolors, the Gardeners did oil pastels, the Hunters took a hike to the cliff, and the Militia did fake battles and stood by the fire. By the end of their night shift, it was 7:00 AM.

The Cooks woke up to prepare a grand breakfast: Scrambled eggs, oatmeal with honey, tea, and coffee. After breakfast, our hike to the cemetery began. We carried our hand-sewn satchels with our journals and walked through a mysterious forest for about a half-mile. When we arrived at the cemetery, we all went to a certain grave of our choosing. There, we wrote poetry in our journals about our trip.

When we returned to the fort, we chose pirozhkis to take to the beach. We ate our pirozhkis and played in the water. After play, it was time to say our farewells to the people of Colony Ross and lower the flag. We got in the cars stuffed backpacks and suitcases and drove away. The cars were like time machines. After the drive, we were in 2015 again. I believe that Colony Ross will always be in our hearts. This trip is truly to be thankful for.

Sincerely yours,
Bella Reyes & Millie Munson
(Feofilat Druzhinin & Katerina Ukkelya)

ELSIE'S CLASS: WRITINGS ON FALL, FORT ROSS & DÍA DE LOS MUERTOS

Día de los Muertos

A soft, cold breeze in the midnight black
Meaningful gravestones, smooth, front and back
A soft glimmer of stars at night, a beautiful shimmer that shines our light
I walk on a path, a path full of flowers
My long lost ancestors come to life for these few hours
Tonight is special, tonight is love
The moon sings songs of the midnight dove
Luminaries, the joy of every year
The loved ones are with us, they are truly right here
Our ancestors sang songs, they taught and played
We cherish all their memories and everything they made
My ancestors' spirits with a gleam on their face
Watch us dance with gowns made of lace
I love the sweet smell of marigolds at night
And a festival lit with luminaries' light
Sugar skulls tell my family they're dear to me
And in the light of the moon, I can see clearly
My ancestors are there and here
This is truly my favorite time of year

By *Ella Kushins* and *Emily Prelletz*

Día de los Muertos

A soft breeze brings the nights' chill
Over the graves and past a hill
A path of marigolds light the way
For our many ancestors on this special day
We cook food and sing songs
To remind us our friends are not gone
They're still here! In the night's air
Prancing around with joy and care
We stay with them all night
Until we see the sun's gold light
And even if you miss them dear
Know that they are all still here!

By *Sky Flores*



Apple Cider

I like apple cider because I like apples
Apples taste good and sweet
But best of all, they're juicy

By *Calvin Sorensen*

Glowing Grass

I see dead grass
Glowing clusters of gold and brown
Like I found a piece of gold
And raised it to the sun

By *Jalen Hansom*

A Creek

I see a creek with leaves, sand, and water
Trees are swaying side to side
And the trees' branches' leaves are falling
And the rocks and grass are helping the
water stay alive

By *Tony Fagundes*

MISS BARNUM'S CLASS:

FORT ROSS JOURNAL ENTRIES & ARTWORK

It is the first of October, and the whole village is up on the cliffs, high above the whispering sea! The sky at the edge of the sea is like a layer cake: golden orange frosting on top, then lavender cream, and finally deep blueberry! The water ripples towards us like a never-ending throng. It comes from the end of the world! But it comes to greet us. The ancestors from forever ride the waves to this spot and climb the cliffs to greet us!

The sky is an orange bonfire tonight, big enough for us ALL to circle about. Is that a seal in the distance? (Or a laughing ancestor, happy to see we are all here waiting for him, on this ancient cliff??)

— Miss Barnum

I see the water is moving.
I see the sun set.
I see the grass is greening.
I see the tree growing.
— Matvei (Lucas)

We are sitting by the ocean.
There is a very pretty sunset.
It reminds me of lanterns lit at night!
— Ukayla (Addy)

I am in a cemetery. I am looking at a lot of crosses. I saw two deer! I see the ocean from here. I am really happy here. I think I am going to cry!
— Iakov (Julian)



I see the beautiful sun setting in the ocean at night. I haven't seen that in a long time. My class is with me. I LOVE IT! — Elena Rocheva (Gabi)

I see the ocean and the sunset. The trees look like a shadow. ... It is getting dark and we're sitting in front of the gates. I hear a sea otter. I can't wait to get into my sleeping bag!
— Vasilii (Alexis)

The sunset is here and the ocean is dark, cool colors. The sunset is so beautiful! It is getting dark in the sky, and all the wonderful things go in me!
— Chaikku (Charlize)

I see birds in the trees. I hear the waves crashing on the beach. I see the shadows of trees. I see a beautiful view! I see 200-year-old graves, with very nice people under them. I see a wonderful place. — Vasilii T. (Theo)

We had a lot of fun at Fort Ross. But the best thing of all is Nature. The calm waves of the sea, the little sounds I hear. Like I heard a little spirit laughing with joy! There are so many things to see in Nature, if you see it the right way. The graveyards, the ocean, and the earth. Earth feels like home to me.
— Katerina (Alena)

The sunset is so beautiful that I'm starting to cry! I just heard a wild boar. It snorted in the distance.
— Il'ia (Leah)



I got to sit at Osips' grave. I put a flower on it.
— Osip (Bailey)



MISS MALIKA'S CLASS: CLASS REPORT

What an incredible start to our school year! Being here in our new school home, making new friends, reconnecting with old friends, watching the season begin to change; it's been magical. In addition to all the fun of settling in, Miss Malika's class has been studying The Harvest. We've been able to share so many wonderful experiences together in celebration.

We started with a trip to the Heirloom Festival, where we ooh'd and aah'd over the tower of harvest vegetables, saw the biggest pumpkins and squash ever and learned about all the amazing diversity of our agricultural community.



Our next field trip was to Spring Hill Dairy and Farm. This family owned farm was a wonderful opportunity for our children to experience a day in the life of a farmer. Our children dug potatoes from the earth, picked a pumpkin to take home, milked a cow and enjoyed some cheese curd and fresh made ice-cream. They also climbed hay stacks, worked their way through two hay mazes and buried themselves in an ocean of corn kernels.

In class we've been singing and dancing and learning harvest poems (we've included one of our favorites here :-). We made bean collages, pumpkin prints, applesauce and apple crisps. Yum! Just this week, we carved pumpkins with our big buddies from Mrs. Carter and Mrs. Montrose's class. What a great way to get all of our senses involved in this beautiful season.

And of course, the Harvest Season makes us especially aware of all we have to be grateful for. Here are just a few appreciations recently shared by our children in class:

"I appreciate my new friends and my new school." Elijah

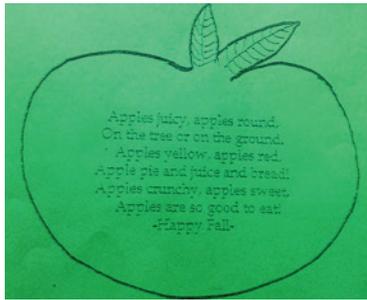
"I appreciate my parents, Miss Malika, Ms. Kristen and Franco." Sephira

"I appreciate I'm finally on the yellow sound boxes." Amara

"I appreciate we got to go to the pumpkin patch and be a part of the harvest." Greyson

"When you cry when you're happy, that's called tears of joy." Ruby

These words (and the smiles on our children's' faces in these pictures) pretty much say it all. There's much to be grateful for here in Miss Malika's room at The Village.



CLASSIFIEDS

CLASS NEEDS MRS. CARTER/ MRS. MONTROSE

For the upcoming Day of the Dead festival, the middle-school class needs: LED tea lights; red, yellow, orange or black table cloths; shoe boxes and photos of loved ones that have passed. (FYI: photos shouldn't contain anyone still living!).

FOR THE GARDEN PROJECT,

- the middle-school class needs:
- wheelbarrows (2)
 - pitchforks (flat ones-9)
 - metal rakes (3)
 - shovels (5)
 - We will also need many bales of straw (20)
 - wood chips

MISS BARNUM

\$\$ donations gladly accepted and appreciated to go towards the beautiful picture books B2 makes for each child at the end of the year. Each one is lovingly and paintstainingly compiled by Miss Barnum from all of the pictures she takes (with an actual camera!) and develops (on actual film!) throughout the year.

MISS MALIKA

Items are still needed for Operation Sandbox. Check the list in the right column.

DAY OF THE DEAD FESTIVAL NEEDS

Please drop off contributions in the office.

- Marigolds
- Sunflowers
- Gourds
- Squash
- Pomegranates
- Oranges
- Pumpkin seeds
- Pan de muertos
- LED votives + candles
- Almond milk
- Slow cookers



OPERATION: SANDBOX

We broke ground a couple of Saturdays ago and are more than halfway finished with the sandbox! Thank you very much to all of the families who came to help out:

Scott Chapman
Michael Lennox
Ed Flores and Skyler
David and Sarai
Benji and Micah
Mitch, Mikela and Malia,
Hattie and Milo

Here is a list of the final materials needed for the completion of the project. If you can contribute any of these items,

please contact Miss Malika. If you would like to make a donation towards the materials already purchased, or towards the cost of the sand which has not been purchased yet, there will be a donation can available by the white board outside of Miss Malika's classroom. Thank you!!

- 16x20 tarp
- 10 ft of PVC pipe, 2 in. diameter
- 3 ea/5 gallon buckets
- 6 ea/ 80lb sacks of concrete
- 6 cubic yards of play sand (See Miss Malika for details on grade/type)

APPRECIATIONS

THANK YOU to all of the parents and staff of VCS who accompanied our kids on the Fort Ross trip... I was not able to go because of work obligations and even though I was a little nervous about letting Simon go, I also knew that each of you would be my eyes, hands and heart for Simon while he was away from me! I appreciate and love our little "village"—you are all very much our extended family! Blessings!—Denise Youseff

Thank you VCS for welcoming Kaitlyn and I into this wonderful program/ community. —Nancy Le

Thank you, field trip drivers for Malika's class trip to the Sonoma County Museum: Stephanie, Liz, Ashley, Mikela, Benjie.

Thank you to all of the parents who donate their time and vehicles to driving our kids to and from their awesome class field trip adventures!!!

Thank you, Alicia, for lending your talents to creating a graphically awesome Voices!!!

If you have an appreciation you'd like to express in the Voices, please submit them to deneene.bell@gmail.com, or drop a note in the office!