



VIPS Happenings

Falmouth Volunteers In Public Schools

Volume 20, No. 1 Fall 2007

VIPS Welcomes New and Returning Volunteers Back-to-School

Fall is a busy time in the schools! For those of you new to volunteering in one of the schools, we welcome you and look forward to meeting you. Your decision to share your time in the public schools will not only make you feel great, it will enhance the education of Falmouth students. VIPS is fortunate—as we begin our 26th year of volunteering in Falmouth Public Schools—to have over 1,100 individuals who, each school year, contribute over 40,000 hours to the schools! Those impressive numbers require administrative support: information from every volunteer registration form and every CORI form has to be recorded, entered into a database, and processed. We will be working with the VIPS Building Coordinators at each school to get everyone to work volunteering!

Speaking of **VIPS Building Coordinators**, we have some new faces this year. Building Coordinators help oversee and manage volunteers in each school. Usually working in teams, these individuals coordinate, schedule, and log volunteer hours. They act as the “eyes and ears” in the schools, helping to identify staff needs for volunteers and assisting the VIPS staff in the placement of volunteers. At East Falmouth Elementary, our coordinators are



Lyn Cenzalli and Lynn Briggs
Mullen-Hall

Kathy Ostrom and **Patty O’Keefe**. They would love to have one additional volunteer to help, so if EF is your school and you are interested, give the VIPS office a call! At Mullen-Hall, two new building coordinators—veterans of the Village Science Playground committee—are **Lynn Briggs** and **Lyn Cenzalli**. North Falmouth’s trio returns: **BJ Almeida**, **Cathy Welch**, and **Diana Tashjian**; and Teaticket Elementary’s veteran coordinators are **Ruth Pearce** and **Donna Randleman**.

At Morse Pond, **Jenn Gonsalves** and **Tina Broderick** are back sharing the coordinator duties. At Lawrence School, long-time building coordinator **Kathy Murray** is joined by a new coordinator, **Michele Lino**. At Falmouth High School, **Janice Forrester** returns as building coordinator, with a new assistant, **Ursula Bohnenberger**. **Lauren Powers** will continue to help out at the high school with sports-related volunteers.



Michele Lino
Lawrence



Ursula Bohnenberger
Falmouth High School

Thanks to all who attended the **VIPS Back-to-School Informational Coffee Hour** at Morse Pond in September! Our program leaders and school personnel were on hand to describe some of our VIPS programs, including **Project Inquire (Ted Burt)**, **Project RISE—Raising Interest and Self-Esteem**, and the **FHS Mentoring Program (Susan Largay)**, the **VIPS School-to-Business Partnerships** program (**Lou Larrey**), and **Read Naturally (Cindy West and Nancy Durfee)**. If you were unable to attend but are interested in one of these programs, contact the office and we will give you more information and let you know about scheduled training sessions.

We’re off to a great start! *Thank you for all that you do!*

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Shopping for VIPS!

VIPS held its first-ever summer fundraiser, a **Ladies Shopping Night**, at the **Coonamessett Inn** in August. Eighteen vendors offered shoppers a wide range of products and services. Participants included: **All a Girl Needs, Arbonne, Body Shop at Home, Bumblebeads, Chrislee Boutique, Creative Memories Scrapbooking, Ella Bella’s of Cape Cod, Kaleidoscope Toys, Lia Sophia, Noah’s Ark Animal Workshops, oolala, Pampered Chef, Skincare by Jenn, Silpada, Southern Living at Home, Stampin’ Up, Stitchery by Stacy**, and **Tastefully Simple**. Thanks to our shoppers and all of the vendors whose donations help support VIPS programming!



Important Reminders

- **VIPS Blankets make great holiday gifts!** If you or someone on your list is a Falmouth sports fan—or just likes to keep cozy during the cool months—these blankets are the perfect gift! In “Clipper maroon,” the fleece blankets feature “Falmouth, Cape Cod” embroidered in white letters. At \$15 each or 2 for \$25, you’ll want to stock up!
- **Log your hours!** Each school has a **VIPS Volunteer Logbook**: a 3-ring binder, with a page for every volunteer filed alphabetically. Don’t forget to count hours spent at home preparing to volunteer, baking, assisting with events, etc. **If your volunteer hours aren’t spent at a school**, feel free to call them in to us at (508) 548-1621 or e-mail your hours to us at vips@falmouth.k12.ma.us.



Teaticket students logging miles at recess

About VIPS

Falmouth Volunteers In Public Schools (VIPS)

was initiated in 1982 as a way to increase interaction between Falmouth schools and the community. Today, 26 years later, VIPS has grown from eight volunteers at Falmouth High School to over 1,100 volunteers in all seven schools. VIPS provides the schools with an organized, reliable volunteer corps that supplements and enriches the curriculum. Volunteers are given the opportunity to use their talents, time and energy in creative, worthwhile ways. Each year, volunteers log thousands of hours—nearly 44,000 last year alone—while supporting the students, faculty, administration and the community. Local businesses contribute to this unique partnership by sponsoring events, providing tax-deductible contributions, donating raffle and auction items, and providing release time or support for employee volunteers.

VIPS Staff:

Tracey Crago – Director

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Drawdé Geishecker – Secretary

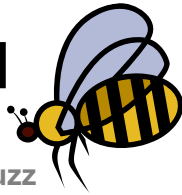
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Share Your Ideas!

VIPS is looking for your input and ideas about...well, everything! Have an idea for a newsletter article? Is someone worthy of recognition? Is there a program that could use some support? Do you have ideas for the VIPS website? How can VIPS be a part of your school events? Let us know!

Call or e-mail us anytime!



School Buzz

Teaticket Elementary's Mile Club is up and running for its second year. Physical Education teacher **Carrie Shanahan** started the program last year to encourage a fun, social, physical fitness program during recess time. As students complete milestones for walking or running during recess, they earn tokens, "which are worn proudly on sneakers, necklaces, and backpacks," says Shanahan. Students aren't the only participants in the voluntary program: parents and staff members are logging miles as well. The program would not be possible without volunteers and Teaticket Elementary staff members, who count and record laps for the children. Log sheets are turned in on Fridays and volunteers tally up the numbers every weekend. Come Monday, totals are posted on the gym wall so that students can see their progress. **Teaticket PTO** is now working with the Mile Club to raise money for new playground equipment: student participants can ask friends and family members for pledges and donations for each mile they complete. Shanahan reports that just four weeks into the program, students have completed over 1,000 miles.

Thanks to the generosity of **Mullen-Hall** families, students at the **Bethany Primary School** in **Namibia** will have plenty of new titles to choose from in their school library. A book/supply drive, coordinated by school adjustment counselor **Wendy Risko**, will benefit the school where Peace Corps volunteer, and Falmouth Public Schools alum, **Erica Loftfield**, will be working. Namibia recently became an English-speaking nation, says Risko, so the supply of books in English will help students learn the language. Risko also credits a Rhode Island-based shipping company, owned by a friend, for making the drive possible by offering to send the items to Erica's school at no charge.

North Falmouth's third graders are preparing for the annual pilgrimage to **Plimoth Plantation**. A great fit with the third grade curriculum, Plimoth Plantation offers students a glimpse of New England life as it was 375 years ago. This field trip requires extensive planning by the teachers, along with help from many parent and volunteer chaperones.

~~The cold weather is coming, but at **Lawrence School** students can chase away the winter blues at the **Winter Blast** carnival organized by parent volunteers with help from staff. Last year's event was canceled for lack of organizers, but you can help keep this fun tradition alive! Contact Lawrence School VIPS Building Coordinator **Michele Lino** (michele.lino@charlandfs.com) to find out how you can help!~~

Inside VIPS



Junior Career Day at Falmouth High School has been postponed until spring, due to ongoing renovations at the high school which has left classroom space at a premium. For more information, or if you are interested in sharing information about your career with high school students, please contact the VIPS office.

Last year marked the 25th anniversary of VIPS—a significant milestone for any organization. As we prepare for the future, the VIPS staff and board of advisors will be gathering input from our constituents: volunteers, school faculty and administration, students, businesses, and community groups. **What are we doing well? How can we improve? Are there unmet needs that VIPS could play a role in addressing?** Over the next several months, we'll be conducting a series of **audience needs assessments**. When we come to you asking for input, please take a few moments to consider our questions. We look forward to working together and continuing our longstanding tradition of enhancing the education of Falmouth students.

VIPS is teaming up with **Falmouth Public Schools'** administration to create a **parent outreach series**, focusing on **current social issues** facing our students. The ongoing series of public presentations—some scheduled during the day and others at night—will give parents, mentors, and interested community members a chance to hear from local experts on topics including substance abuse, self-destructive behaviors, Internet safety, behavior as communication, respecting cultural differences, anxiety, and eating disorders, among others. The seminars provide an opportunity for parents, mentors, and interested individuals to gain access to the latest information, research, terminology, and community resources available. *For more information, contact the VIPS office, or Pupil Personnel office at the Administration Building.*



Spotlight: Project Inquire

You would only have to meet **Ted Burt** once to know that his enthusiasm is contagious. Couple that with the expertise of Teaticket Elementary's gifted and talented teacher, Maureen "**Reenie**" Dwyer, and you have a solid foundation for one of VIPS' longest-running programs, **Project Inquire**. The mentorship-based program serving motivated and talented students in grades 4-6 originated in 1990 with grant funding. Ted, who was then new to Falmouth, got involved; when the funding ended, he took over the program on a volunteer basis for VIPS. Ever since, **Project Inquire** has matched mentors with an average of 20 students each year.



"**Project Inquire** provides a way for the student [participants] to be challenged in a way that they might not otherwise experience," Ted explains. Working with a trained mentor for 6-8 weeks (or longer), students choose a topic, research it, and present their findings to an audience of their choice, usually classmates. He tells mentors—and Ted himself mentors multiple students each year—"you're making a friend, teaching inquiry and the research process, and [exploring] new ways of thinking."

Students who participate in **Project Inquire** are generally identified by their classroom teachers or specialists as gifted, talented, and motivated. Though the district does not offer a formal 'gifted and talented' program, says Reenie Dwyer, there are specialists at each school who look at students' task commitment, achievement, and motivation. These specialists recommend the students to their classroom teacher and to Reenie and Ted. **Project Inquire is always looking for new mentors**, since not all students who qualify for motivated and talented-type enrichment activities can be served.

Recently, VIPS was awarded a grant from the **Cape Cod Foundation's Cape Youth Force** program to train Falmouth High School students to become **Project Inquire** mentors. In addition to helping serve the unmet needs for **Project Inquire** mentors, the high school students will gain valuable mentoring skills, meet a new young friend, and fulfill a portion of their community service obligation. *Interested in learning more about Project Inquire? Contact VIPS.*

Volunteer Profile: Bob Weiss



It may not come as much of a surprise that many of VIPS' 1,100+ volunteers share their volunteer time among several organizations. But **Bob Weiss** may hold the record when it comes to volunteering in schools. The East Falmouth resident's volunteering is distributed among four other school districts from Massachusetts to Florida. His niche: creating **flashcards for elementary students**.

The former Foxborough elementary school principal creates flashcards for students in grades 1-3. Parents of young Falmouth students may recognize Bob's handiwork: thousands of sets of his flashcards—some with math facts and, more recently, those featuring commonly used words—are used in Falmouth classrooms.

Several years ago one of Bob's two sons asked him where he could get some math cards for his grandson. "I made some for him and I guess that's where the idea got started," he says. "East Falmouth Elementary is right up the road, so I went in with some cards and asked if they might be interested. Wow! They really liked them."

Bob's dedication is impressive—he estimates that each set of 50 cards takes about an hour. He starts by cutting leftover matte board—donated by art galleries and framing shops—into uniform 1-1/2 x 3-inch pieces. Bob works from a master list of addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division problems and separates them by "lower level" and "upper level" problems, appropriate for different grade levels and/or student ability. He then writes in each problem by hand and bundles up the sets. *(continued above)*

Profile (cont'd)

Bob's daughter, an elementary school reading supervisor in Arlington, VA, suggested he create "most commonly used words" flashcards. She supplied the lists of words, and Bob got busy assembling the 100-word sets (geared for first graders) and 150-word sets (for second graders).

In addition to Falmouth, Bob supplies flashcards to schools in Windsor, CT (where his son resides), Arlington, VA (where his daughter works), Naples, FL (where Bob and his wife, Brenda, spend the winter months), and Foxborough.

Bob is quick to point out that his thousands of volunteer hours wouldn't be possible if not for the generosity of frame shops, including **Falmouth Framing and Art Gallery**, whose owner Aggie Winalski supplies him with bags of leftover matte board. *Thanks, Bob, for all that you do for our young students!*

Dine Out, Support VIPS

Do you or does someone you know love eating out? If so, the **Cape Cod Dining Book** is the perfect way to take advantage of some great discounts at your favorite local restaurants. They also make terrific gifts! The 2008 book is now available, and features big savings at over **70** Cape restaurants, many in Falmouth and Mashpee. At \$30 each, the book pays for itself when used only two or three times. The 2008 VIPS edition features exclusive savings to Falmouth favorites. Available at the VIPS office or at **Video Paradise** (426 East Falmouth Hwy., 508-457-1388); pay with cash or make checks payable to VIPS.

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Calling All STUDENT Volunteers!

Students: are you volunteering after school? on weekends? Do you tutor? coach? teach music lessons? Have you helped with a clothing drive? car wash? bake sale? fundraiser? *If you answered "yes" to any of these questions, you should be logging your hours!* VIPS recently introduced a **Student Volunteer Registration Form**. These forms are available at Lawrence and FHS. Fill out a form, and VIPS will help you keep a record of your volunteer contributions. *Why bother?* Just ask a friend or family member who has recently applied to college or tried to get an internship, scholarship, or job... they will tell you: volunteering may not pay in dollars, but it can yield big dividends! Interested? Contact VIPS and we'll get you started!

Help Wanted!

VIPS is looking for **program leaders** to fill the following vacancies:

- **Fluency/Tutoring/ESL:** This program leader assists the VIPS office in coordinating volunteers who are interested in tutoring, literacy, and ESL (English as a Second Language). The program leader would attend occasional meetings and work with VIPS to set up training for volunteers and serve as the liaison between schools/staff requesting volunteers for fluency, tutoring, and ESL.
- **CAST (Cross Age Science Teaching program):** This program leader works with science teaching staff at the Lawrence School to train groups of 7th and 8th grade students in hands-on, inquiry-based science lessons. The program leader then helps arrange for these students to teach the lessons to elementary school students. Transportation for the Lawrence students to an elementary school is provided; two sessions/year is ideal.

Also needed:

- A VIPS **Building Coordinator** at **East Falmouth Elementary**. Building coordinators work with VIPS and school staff to serve as the liaisons—the “eyes and ears” who help coordinate, schedule, and oversee volunteers in each school. Working as a team member, building coordinators attend occasional meetings at the VIPS office and help track volunteer hours and participation. Training and support is provided.

Interested? Want to know more? Call or e-mail us today!

...a community service provided by **ENTERPRISE PUBLISHING** of Cape Cod

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