



The High School View

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Project Vine unplugs on Penikese Island

BY LILY SEBASTIAN, HARDY EVILLE, AND OLIVIA MACPHERSON

Nestled in the Elizabeth Islands lies 75-acre Penikese Island, which has housed a hospital for leprosy, a residential boys school, a bird sanctuary, and most recently, students and teachers from Martha's Vineyard Regional High School's (MVRHS) Project Vine Program.

Thirteen students and three staff members attended the three-day retreat in early October, which allowed everyone to build stronger relationships while taking a step back from our tech-driven world.

Project Vine is an alternative learning option embedded within MVRHS

that focuses on community building and hands-on learning. Dani Charbonneau, English teacher and Project Vine department chair, says, "Project Vine is more about building relationships with the people in the program and the teachers than it is about the curriculum."

This idea of focusing on interaction with one another was what led Project Vine to take short retreats, trying out multiple locations before settling on Penikese, where students were able to engage in activities like cooking, fishing, and swimming.

"We try to offer these experiences that are truly extra-curricular," said Ms. Charbonneau. "It's an opportunity to learn things you might not



PHOTO COURTESY OF PROJECT VINE

Students and staff of Project Vine participate in a team-building activity on Penikese Island.

realize you need to know."

Separated from the rest of the world, Penikese has no electricity or running water. There is a sink that is gravity-fed by rainwater from

a cistern, but no showers. Students are asked to leave phones and all other electronic devices at home for a chance to focus on spending quality time getting to

know their peers. Junior Neveaha Jackson said, "It was a good opportunity to bond with students that we didn't know beforehand."

On the island, the students were split into three groups, and worked together to cook, serve, and clean up after meals. This year, cooking was easier because students were able to cook using a propane stove instead of a wood-fired one, but there were still learning opportunities.

"I taught multiple people how to use a can opener," said Ms. Charbonneau. "It's hilarious. The fails are wonderful."

The group also took part in "silly physical obstacle courses" and a Lego building competition. Students were encouraged to explore the island through a scavenger hunt that incentivized picking up trash.

The Penikese Island trip was canceled in 2020 due to

COVID, but Ms. Charbonneau and the Project Vine staff are planning to go again next year if they can raise the funds. The trip is paid for via fundraising, and is run at no cost to the students who attend, which allows the trip to be accessible to more students. While some people have suggested charging money for the trip to reduce the reliance on fundraising, Ms. Charbonneau feels that the trip must remain free.

"There are students who would never apply to go if there were a price tag on it," she said.

Ms. Charbonneau believes that the time away from the hustle and bustle of the school day brought students closer to others they had not talked to before: "Project Vine has been trying to rebuild community since the shutdown, and this was a big opportunity to be a weird little family for a few days." **HSV**

New school year, new schedule

BY THEODORE FAIRCHILD-COPPOLETTI

Last year, the schedule at the Martha's Vineyard Regional High School (MVRHS) felt like it was constantly evolving. This year, however, the administration has created another new schedule, in the hopes of bringing consistency back to students' academic experience.

Tuesday and Thursday will always have ABCD periods, Wednesday and Friday will always have EFGH periods, and Monday will alternate between the two. The two periods in the middle of each day are always the same: B and C always meet together, as do F and G. This is different from the previous schedule, where every day alternated between ABCD and EFGH periods, with the order of the periods rotating as well.

One rationale behind the new schedule is that the consistency it affords will make it easier for part-time faculty to work with students. "We have a part-time strings teacher; she can come in because B period meets at the same time. We also have a part-time counselor who comes in and can meet with people in consistent ways," said Principal Sara Dingley. "One of the things we're looking to do is deepen community connections."

The consistency of the new schedule also helps students who work part-time. Work study and mentorship are two programs where juniors and seniors can spend class time working for local employers, leaving for two or four period blocks in a day. These programs allow students to receive school credit for real workplace experience.

Career and Technical

Education (CTE) coordinator and culinary teacher Jack O'Malley sees the potential positive impact of schedule changes on these programs. "I think the schedule will lend

"One of the things we're looking to do is deepen community connections."

itself to allowing more kids to go out into co-op and work study programs," he said. "It's a new opportunity."

He added, "I think that any time a student can experience a workplace setting, it's very beneficial in helping them figure out what they want to do. People watch culinary shows and think they want to

become chefs, but it's different from actually working in a commercial kitchen."

A new addition to the CTE program is the co-op program, which is similar to the work-study program in the sense that students commit to four periods of intensive career study, but instead of working off-campus, students stay in school.

Senior Jake Cleland is doing two work studies with MV Mini Splits and Perry Electric. "It's definitely something I would really like to pursue," he said. "It's a lot of fun."

Another change to the school day is the decision to hold detention during lunch periods, as opposed to after school. "We're experimenting with having lunch detention for students who are [frequently] late," said Ms. Dingley. "[Students] give up their phones, and together we will go through

their grades with them, sort of like a check-in, with some members of the Student Affairs Office."

According to Ms. Dingley, the lunch detention was implemented to ensure student attendance and not take time away from extracurriculars.

"The theory is that it would make it easier for kids who have sports after school," said Ms. Dingley. "I also think we can pull kids out who may not go [to an after-school detention], and make sure that they're in the space. It's hard to chase kids down after school."

For some students and teachers, the new schedule has its issues.

"It doesn't really take into account people who do sports," said junior Vivian Peak. "A lot of my friends who are doing sports and extracurriculars are having trouble."

Games, for example, are often scheduled for the same days in the week, and when the schedule doesn't alternate, students miss the

same classes.

Chemistry teacher Natalie Munn has mixed feelings about the new schedule. "I actually like having the mentor meeting on Fridays. I think it's just a more relaxing start of the week," she said. "But I liked having the alternating days a lot. I find it sometimes a little challenging having the back-to-back classes."

Dr. Munn also thinks the new schedule could complicate field trips. "I have a leadership class in G period, and it never [follows or precedes] flex time. When planning a field trip, there are certain periods that you could never combine with flex," she said. This would shorten the amount of time for field trips on certain periods, or potentially prevent classes from being able to travel off-campus at all.

"I do get the reasoning behind it, and mostly I just don't want them to do away with flex," said Dr. Munn. "I'm trying to keep an open mind about it, because I get the value." **HSV**

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Island Proofreading
Irene E. Ziebarth
3 Tennis Lane
Chilmark, MA 02535
202-680-8076
ireneziebarth@gmail.com