



# The High School View

The High School View is staffed and prepared entirely by students from the Martha's Vineyard Regional High School, and published on their behalf by The Martha's Vineyard Times, with the generous assistance of the sponsors whose names appear below.

## Marina Pessoni feels at home helping others

BY JULIA SAYRE AND ELLA KEENE

Senior Marina Pessoni plans to study nursing after she graduates from Martha's Vineyard Regional High School (MVRHS), but her passion for helping others has led her to focus on a different kind of care: improving the quality of life for members of the Island's elderly population.

Two to three days every week, Marina volunteers at the Martha's Vineyard Center for Living (MVC4L), a nonprofit organization that provides services for the Island's elderly community as well as people with physical and cognitive impairments.

On her volunteer days, Marina becomes an active participant in the organization's programming, conversing



COURTESY MARINA PESSONI

with older adults and assisting them during activities such as photography, exercise, and bingo. Marina also helps people with tasks of daily living, such as walking, eating, and using the bathroom.

"I've been having a blast

there. I'm learning more than just healthcare, and a lot about communication," she said. "We have a lot of conversations. You get to learn more about [the visitors'] lives, personalities, and their own thoughts and feelings."

Marina began volunteering in January, and has appreciated the types of relationships she's built with program participants and staff. "I wouldn't mind staying in this type of care because it's really rewarding," Marina said. "I don't think I would have experiences like this in a hospital. Everyone at MVC4L is unique, and every day I learn something about them that surprises me," she said.

Katie Vieira, the administrative assistant at MVC4L, feels that Marina's passion for her volunteer work is rare. "It is hard to find young people these days who want to work with our older adults and those impacted by physical or cognitive impairments," she said. "It's a breath of fresh air to have her around."

Marina spends her volunteer hours conversing in

English at MVC4L, the result of a long journey of language learning. Marina moved to Martha's Vineyard from Brazil when she was in sixth grade. At that time she did not speak English. She began attending the West Tisbury School and later attended the Oak Bluffs School, but her path to mastering English began at the Tisbury School's summer school program for English language learners.

"I think summer school helped me because I was there every day, learning and listening. I came out of my bubble after Tisbury, and I became more comfortable [speaking English]," she said.

For Marina, the process of learning English felt isolating — and it was her growing circle of friends that made the process easier.

"People were welcoming, but I couldn't come to them and communicate as well as others. I felt really alone and like an outcast. Eventually, I started to make more friends, and they helped me out," she said.

Years have passed, and now Marina is the one making people feel comfortable and helping them acclimate to new situations. When she is not at the Center for Living, Marina spends her free time focused on helping newer immigrants who have moved to Martha's Vineyard. She is working to create an Instagram page to connect Brazilian students with resources and opportunities, @mv.bryouth.

Marina doesn't see volunteering at MVC4L as simply a steppingstone on her career path towards nursing. "It's more than just volunteering or getting credit hours. It's really a life experience," she said. **HSV**

## It's showtime for 'Les Mis'!

BY THEO FAIRCHILD - COPPOLETTI, HARDY EVILLE, AND OLIVIA MACPHERSON

After a two-year hiatus, the Martha's Vineyard Regional High School (MVRHS) theater department is performing "Les Miserables" ("Les Mis"), a musical following peasant Jean Valjean throughout 19th century France, and the conflicted ensemble of characters he meets along the way. The play, which features a mixed orchestra and cast of students and community members, runs from Thursday, March 30, to Sunday, April 2.

"As the musical director, the thing that always pulls me about ['Les Mis'] is obviously the music," said performing arts department chair Abigail Chandler.

"There's some unbelievably beautiful, heartbreaking ballads and duets, and the ensembles are amazing. It's so beautifully scored."

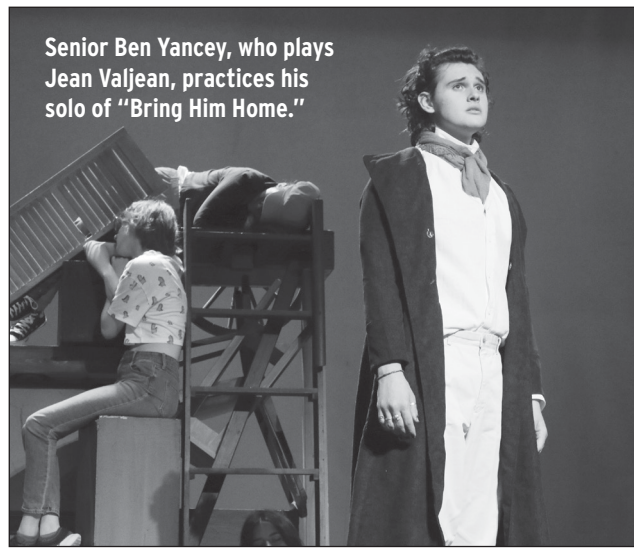
The show, which has been in production for almost a year, includes approximately 20 students from Island elementary schools. "We had a few other shows in mind, but none of them seemed big enough," said Ms. Chandler. "We envisioned a really big community celebration, and a 'let's get back together' event."

The mask mandate, which was lifted on March 5, added an additional obstacle to rehearsing "Les Mis." "The challenge [this year] has been singing in masks. It's not impossible, but it's really unpleasant. There is some heavy-duty, legitimate singing, which requires a whole lot of breath."

Senior Ingrid Moore is cast as M. Thenardier, which has been her dream role since she was 5 years old. "It feels so good to play the role that I've always wanted to play," she said. "Since he's such a comedic role, I had the liberty to speak a lot of my lines, or scream them, because I'm also evil."

For sophomore Gabriella Silveira, who plays Gavroche, her favorite part of the play is dying.

"I like it because I get to be so dramatic when I'm dying. I want to make everybody in the audience cry. And it's just fun," she said. "[Theater] is a good way for me to goof off and be myself. Sometimes when you get bored of your own life, you can go into a character and experience their emotions, and if your life is bad,



Senior Ben Yancey, who plays Jean Valjean, practices his solo of "Bring Him Home."

HARDY EVILLE

you go and play a character that's happy."

Junior Jack Crawford wanted to audition for the role of Marius after seeing the film version of "Les Mis."

"I resonated the most with Marius. I liked all the songs he was singing, and I wanted to do that as well," he said. "I like his perseverance throughout the whole show.

However, he is the most oblivious person."

Director Brooke Ditchfield is enjoying the play's production despite the complexity. "There's a lot of moving parts to put together, but the fun of it is happening right now, where it is all starting to come together and you can see costumes everywhere," she said. "[The theater room]

is not only my classroom, but it's also the production office and the costume shop."

Ditchfield said the cast and crew took time to "draw connections" between "Les Mis" and the recent invasion of Ukraine.

"The themes of the play are universal human themes: people just wanting their freedom, wanting happiness, and wanting to be able to have the chance to build a life for themselves," she said.

Ditchfield hopes that "Les Mis" "signals both a return to normalcy and an opportunity for people to gather together."

"Now that we're coming out of COVID and some of these restrictions are getting lifted, live performance is coming back," Ditchfield said. "My hope is that the whole Island community will be really excited to experience some live theater at the high school." **HSV**

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