



Youth Summit for Sustainable Development
June 26 - July 2, 2010
The Menemsha Inn, Martha's Vineyard



The Vineyard Youth Summit was held this week at The Menemsha Inn. It was great! Vineyard youth joined with Caribbean youth to learn how to become leaders and what we can do together to change our lives and the world. Over the course of seven days, Vineyard youth leaders learned about the importance of sustainable development and how to support it within the island's community.

This is the Stone Soup Leadership Institute's 6th annual Youth Summit. The Institute is an organization founded on the Vineyard in 1997 training young and emerging leaders to build a more sustainable world. The organization has created youth leadership initiatives in other island communities of Virgin Gorda and Vieques. Youth leaders from those islands served as project coordinators and speakers at the Vineyard Youth Summit. This summer's 2010 Youth Summit consists of two project coordinators, four Vineyard faculty members, three Stone Soup faculty members, three Caribbean youth delegates and over fifteen island youth delegates.

It began with two eventful days around our Island. For our first activity we traveled to the cliffs in Aquinnah.

The Institute's board member Nane Alejandrez held an appreciation circle where we honored the people who had contributed to our lives, character or granted us solace in a time of need. These included friends, teachers, family members, and even political figures.

The Institute's Project Director, Arianna Caplan, held a leadership circle where we discussed values and behaviors we wanted to create for the week. Arianna summarized our discussion into a few keywords: such as "people who talk a lot should talk less and vice-versa," became "step up, step down." We came to the consensus of five themes we would follow for the week:

- * **Respect** * **Step Up-Step Back**
- * **Tolerance** * **Honesty** * **An Open Mind**



Wampanoag Chief Ryan Malonson, Tribal Administrator Tobias Vanderhoop, Youth Coordinator Christy Moreis welcomed us with a song and a few prayers. We then traveled to the Wampanoag Tribal Center where both communities shared what would become a memorable experience of a Wampanoag cooked meal and sharing.

We clarified a few misconceptions about the Wampanoag traditions. One of them, as explained, was "wampum was never used as currency... instead it was used in garments and belts that were used for trade and communication." Questions and answers circulated back and forth until it was time for the youth delegates to depart. The interaction between the island's youth and its cultural roots, a clear establishment of the importance of sustainability was made to the youth delegates.

Martha's Vineyard Youth Leadership Initiative
www.mvyl.org

We received our beautiful oceania blue Youth Summit T-shirts with the whale as our avatar. Earlier this year, 98 right whales passed through the Vineyard waters. They are a powerful symbol of how we must work together to preserve these endangered species and our fragile ecosystems.



We then went to the beach to find our “magic stone”. Making Stone Soup is a tale about a community that had little but discovered they had more than enough to be happy when they shared everything they had. Once we found our stone, our Stone Soup activity consisted of everyone sharing their dreams and compassions and embedding them into a stone they had discovered on the beach. “I picked this stone because it appears perfect, but isn’t,” said youth leader, Kelsey Dandeneau. “No one is perfect. This stone represents that.”



One World, One Ocean

That afternoon, people in 900 communities across the country joined together at their beaches in solidarity with the people affected by the Gulf Oil spill and to take a stand against oil drilling and for clean energy. We were the only Hands Across the Sand event on Martha’s Vineyard.

Our Stone Soup community shared some thoughts about how we could prevent the catastrophe from happening again. “We’re always looking for someone to blame,” Arianna Caplan said, “Why can’t we just focus on a

solution?” Our Caribbean youth delegates were very concerned about the effect on their islands. Many popular responses were to convert to renewable energy. When asked about his thoughts on converting to alternative forms of energy, Oscar Thompson replied, “[it’s] challenging. It’ll be hard to break away from oil and turn to unknown technology that might fail. It might not be comfortable for some people.”

Our Stone Soup community created a message on the beach to express our concern and our vision. We agreed that everything in the world was intricately related. Our message was “One World, One Ocean”. We drew an Earth in the sand and wrote the message around it. As a finishing touch, we applied dried seaweed to outline the words and fresh green seaweed onto the continents of the drawn world. Everyone crowded behind it and took a photo to commemorate the event.

The second day of the Martha’s Vineyard Youth Summit was a tour of the island’s agriculture, businesses, and sustainable development initiatives like Island Co-Housing, a community promoting sustainable and affordable housing. While most of the youth have lived on the island for over a decade, some had never visited. Our tour guide was Island legend, Bob Woodruff who had a wealth of information to share with us. One wrote, “I had already known about and had even worked at some of the local businesses, but during those two days, I developed a deeper appreciation about them.”

The first stop of the day was at the Edgartown School’s garden. On Martha’s Vineyard, the importance of agriculture is taught to children in connection with their schools’ curriculum through the Island Grown Initiative (IGI). “Not only do we teach about the importance of organic foods and farming, but we also find a way to incorporate it with different classes, such as our pi-garden,” IGI Schools Director, Noli Taylor explained, “With the pi-garden, children can learn math terms like ‘radius’ and ‘circumference’ while still learning about farming.” The “pi-garden” was a circular garden bed divided equally into different slices to give each grade a space to plant their crops. By connecting garden education with academic education, IGI gives students learn the importance of agriculture and provide healthier eating options for lives.

It was so energizing for me to get to speak to the delegates of the Youth Summit, and to be around a group of young people devoting their time to envisioning the future they want for themselves and their communities. I left my time with the delegates knowing that great things were going to emerge from their time together, and feeling humbled that I got to be a part of such a powerful gathering.

Noli Taylor

Our Summit community then traveled to the Farm Institute for a tour led by the farm's Education Director, Sidney Morris. The Farm Institute is a livestock and agricultural farm that delivered healthy food to the island community while educating young people about the importance of farming. They have a variety of animals year round including goats, sheep, pigs, rabbits, and chickens. Within one of the buildings near the barn, a schedule was posted, and Sidney explained that the farm provided classes to educate the children on the Vineyard. He went on to show an earth-shaped garden. Each "continent" possessed plants that originated from the corresponding geographical region to show the variety of plants that have been shared across the world. At the end of the tour, Sidney proudly concluded "...[the Farm Institute] teaches young children on the island the importance of farming while having them develop relationships with animals."

"The young folks who responded to this opportunity for envisioning their dreams are a powerful bunch. It was clear to me that they have plenty of energy for meeting the challenges our society is facing, now and in the years to come. If we give them some real responsibility for creating the future, support for their process, and access to the tools of our new century, there's no telling what they will come up with, most likely thinking outside of more containers than just 'the box'!"

Sidney Morris

The Martha's Vineyard Youth Summit stopped at other sustainable businesses throughout the day such as Morning Glory Farm, the island's main local crop distributor who had gone more green by installing a wind turbine to power their farm stand and greenhouse; Dot's Dumptique, a shop that is run by the phrase, "one man's junk is another man's treasure," by selling old clothing and items that would otherwise have been thrown away; and Island Co-Housing, community that has a compost, garden, and raises chickens and green building practices such as solar and compost toilets. We rested and ate lunch by their pond. We said goodbye to our tour guide Bob Woodruff.

I had the great advantage of having several giant mentors, and the equally rewarding experience of being able to mentor or teach throughout my career. Youth are going to be facing some monumental challenges in their lives. The work you are doing to help further their leadership skills is profoundly important.

Bob Woodruff



We then split into three kayaking groups departing to Sengekontacket, Chappaquidick's Cape Poge with Liz Baldwin and Menemsha Pond with Buddy Vanderhoop.



The group who went to the Sengekontacket learned not only how to kayak, but also the importance of a sustainable ecosystem. Dave Grundon, the Oak Bluffs Shellfish Department director, explained how human effects such as global warming were harming the wildlife by changing the environment where organisms live. Dave's staff take water samples annually and measures their PH (acidity) levels while also protecting or harvesting different species of marine life to help preserve the ecosystem. "You don't want to have too much of something," Mr. Grundon stated, explaining that an overpopulation of species can throw a biological equilibrium off-balance. As my former mentor, Mr. Grundon and I had harvested freshwater starfish to keep the ecosystem of Sengekontacket in check. "We were harvesting them [the starfish] to protect the clam population because there were too many of them." By the end of the day, Dave Grundon taught the youth leaders about the importance of an ecosystem and the efforts the island community is making to preserve it.

The trip around the island visiting its businesses and different communities proved to be a great experience to the Stone Soup Community. At the various farms they learned about the importance of sustainable agriculture as well as the role that it played on their island, and kayaking along some of the bodies of water allowed Youth Leaders to learn about what was going on with the ecosystem and what actions were being taken to sustain it.

For the next five days our mornings included a leadership circle where we shared the highlights from the previous day and choose a value for the day. Each Caribbean youth delegate then made a presentation on their island: Bahamas, Jamaica, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, Vieques and Virgin Gorda. We had Vineyard speakers. On Monday Noli Taylor gave us the big picture about Sustainable Agriculture with lunch from IGI's sponsor, Cronig's Market. Tuesday, was our water day with Emma Green Beach, MV Shellfish Hatchery and Liz Baldwin, Felix Neck and with lunch from Net Result.



On Wednesday Andrew Woodruff from Whippoorwill Farm shared his dreams and youth delegates Lisa Wilson and Mary Vogel on "Being a Vegetarian". Scottish Bakehouse our vegetarian sponsor. Thursday was our business day with Mark Martin, Eco MV and lunch from Newman's Own.

I entered the room expecting to meet a group of curious young adults that I could educate and inspire, but left with the overwhelming feeling that I had just been introduced to our future.

Mark Martin, Eco MV Inc.

Every afternoon we met in small groups based upon our career goals. I was in the future doctors group with Virgin Gorda youth leader Connie Williams who plans to be the first pediatrician on her island. Other groups included future psychologist, psychiatrist and social service providers with Arianna Caplan; future environmentalists and farmers, future media and artists,

future business, future mechanical engineers with Josue Cruz.

Finally we worked on projects aligned with our goals for our island and the planet. The media team produced a video, the music team wrote a song, as an aspiring writer, I am creating our first newsletter, and the environmental team worked with Martha's Vineyard's top map maker to create the Sustainable Vineyard Map.



"Working with the students on the Sustainable Vineyard map at the Vineyard Youth Summit was quite the unique experience," Chris Seidel, "It was refreshing to work with young people who were so engaged, energized, enthused, and uninhibited in their thinking and sharing of ideas. The students were able to recognize the larger complexities of mapping (i.e. privacy issues, equitable representation, etc.) and debate the issues and reach a consensus. This was truly a memorable experience."

We planned future year-round activities with the Martha's Vineyard Youth Leadership Initiative. We signed up for leadership opportunities including Plum TV interviews; representing the Vineyard for the Governor's Youth Statewide Council, traveling to Boston to meet with Governor Patrick and Senator Kerry's offices (and a Red Sox game!), youth representative to the MV Commission. We designed a community service project – scheduled for Saturday, October 23 – where we will build a greenhouse at Whippoorwill so the Islanders can enjoy year-round greens. We're also planning a beach-clean up and a health and cultural diversity day.

At Graduation, we welcomed parents, nominating organizations, MV Rotary Club, sponsors and even the director of the Martha's Vineyard Commission. We gave gifts to The Menemsha Inn owner, Sarah Nixon. We enjoyed previewing of the video, performing the song, unveiling the first draft of the Sustainable Vineyard Map.

We look forward to sharing them with the Island community at our event in honor of Walter Cronkite on July 18 at the Old Whaling Church where we will share our dream and our Sustainability-In-Action projects.

By learning about the island through bonding with our island community and learning about the importance of sustainable development, the Youth Leaders and Stone Soup community are one step closer to improving the world!

Anna Zen Hughes

Congratulations to the Youth Delegates

- Amoy Anderson
- Shavanae Anderson
- Shawna Kaye Brown
- Je'Vaughn Crooks
- Kelsey Dandenau
- Shelby Ferry
- Evan Hall
- Emma Ryan HallBilsback
- Isaac Hurwitz
- Anna Zen Hughes
- Kayla Johnson
- Meagan McDonough
- Grant Meacham
- Chris Pitt
- Oscar Thompson
- Mary Vogel
- Lisa Wilson

Youth Summit Song

*The power's in the hands of the people.
But one man can only lift one stone
And one voice can only sing one song.
But together the people are strong.*

By Evan Hall and Isaac Hurwitz

We're In the News!

Generation Green Gathers for Summit

Teenagers and young adults, some from the Vineyard, others from the Caribbean, were on an unusual bus tour of the Island last week, taking in the Dumptique, school gardens, Island Cohousing, the Farm Institute and Morning Glory Farm. The young group was part of the Stone Soup for the World Youth Summit, and the sight-seeing was designed to coax them in their contemplation of how they could build a more sustainable future

Vineyard Gazette, July 2, 2010

<http://www.mvgazette.com/article.php?26124>

Watch us on Plum TV: July 11-16

Oscar Thompson and Emma HallsBilsBack talk about the Sustainable Vineyard Map. Chris Pitt's video on Youth Summit highlights is featured. Grant Meacham announces event honoring Walter Cronkite on July 18.

MOVY Radio: July 16

Featuring Emma HallsBilsBack

Many thanks to those who nominated us!

Sherri Church
Leo Frame
Jane Parquet
Karen Krowski
Sidney Morris
Noli Taylor

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- Scottish Bakehouse
- Seafood Shanty
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