

# The Martha's Vineyard TIMES

## Martha's Vineyard Regional High School students test-drive careers

By [Dan Cabot](#)  
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Photo courtesy of Marianne Larned  
MVRHS student Willoe Maynard (left) with photographer Randi Baird.

The Martha's Vineyard Youth Leadership Initiative (MVYLI) recently held its third annual Job Shadow Day (JSD), culminating with a reception at the Harbor View Hotel on Friday, Feb. 1. Each participating MVYLI student spent time with a mentor, either observing the mentor at work or discussing the mentor's career path. Some of the visits took place on the day of the reception (hence the name), but others had taken place earlier.

An interesting pairing was senior Shavanae Anderson with Liz Witham, partner with Ken Wentworth in Film-Truth Productions. Ms. Anderson plans to be a pediatrician, and in the first two JSDs, she observed doctors and nurses at the Martha's Vineyard Hospital in the operating room and radiology. However, one of her hobbies is film-making, and she has held an MVTV internship. She met Ms. Witham at the Martha's Vineyard Film Festival, where both showed short films. It happened that on JSD, the Martha's Vineyard Scottish Society was celebrating "Burns Nicht" at the Harbor View, and Ms. Anderson was able to assist Ms. Witham in filming the event, then break away to attend the JSD reception, even as her mentor was busy documenting the haggis in a room down the hall.

Ms. Anderson told the assembled mentors and shadows that she still plans on medicine, but film-making is a powerful draw.

Another shadow who was busy at the Harbor View on JSD was Sivana Brown, who was shadowing Elizabeth Rothwell, marketing and events director at the hotel. In her remarks, Ms. Rothwell commented that Ms. Brown not only observed, but pitched in and helped get ready for the Scottish Society's dinner. "We really needed her this afternoon," she said.

Ms. Brown told The Times that event planning is exactly what she'd like to do. She envisions herself as a consultant working directly with consumers, rather than with a hotel.

Julia Cooper explored the life of a college professor with former LaSalle University teacher John Kennedy, who



now lives on the Vineyard year-round. Mr. Kennedy told The Times that he explained the education and publishing expectations of college teaching. Ms. Cooper told The Times that she is interested in college teaching, but will also consider secondary education.

Photographer Randi Baird showed Willoe Maynard her digital darkroom and explained post-production.

Junior James Roddy is interested in technical writing and was paired with Ellen Leverenz of Oracle software, who led him in an online tour of the Apache Software Foundation. He said Ms. Leverenz told him that his interest in language and critical thinking would be very useful in writing software manuals.

Richard Paradise, founder of the Martha's Vineyard Film Society, talked with Lucas Amirans, who is interested in the business side of movies, marketing films and the film industry. Mr. Paradise told The Times that he stressed how often Americans start new careers, sometimes more than once. Mr. Paradise started in college as a Biology and Chemistry major, then got into marketing, and later in life founded the non-profit MVFS, which built the new Film Center. Mr. Paradise said that programs like JSD are vital in any student's careers search. "It lets them test-drive a career," he said.

The reception, hosted by the Harbor View, was emceed by MVRHS senior Jacob Lawrence, who is an example of the kinds of JSD benefit Mr. Paradise spoke of. In the 2012 JSD, he was mentored by Brian Bilsback at PricewaterCoopers, where he learned about careers as a global economist. This year he was matched with the media relations office of Senator John Kerry. "I learned that this field fit me a lot better," he said.

Mr. Lawrence told the gathering that JSD answers the students' never-ending question, "When are we going to use this?" From his own shadowing experience, he advises student mentees, "The mentors are great, but be sure to interview others — even interns can give you insights."

Mr. Lawrence introduced Anna Luckey, MVYLI development coordinator, and Sandra Hart Johnson, MVYLI project coordinator, who presented certificates to the mentors and mentees. Some of the mentors were unable to attend (Elizabeth Rothwell and Liz Witham were busy with the Scottish Society), as were a few of the mentees. In one case, the mentee, Lilly Neville, was in Spain, taking a semester abroad, and her mentor, Detective Michael Snowden of the Edgartown police department, was absent, apparently on police business.

Mr. Lawrence also thanked the event sponsors, the Martha's Vineyard Savings Bank and the Permanent Endowment for Martha's Vineyard.

### **Other MVYLI programs**

In a press release, MVYLI executive director Marianne Larned said, "We are exposing young minds to inspiring leaders, opening doors and expanding their horizons. We invite people to join with us in investing in these young people to become leaders of a sustainable world."

Like other members, Mr. Roddy was high in his praise of the MVYLI. "It allows us to make connections to people we wouldn't normally have," he said. Mr. Roddy participated in the MVYLI Summit for Sustainable Development, held last June, and has been helping draft Chilmark town bylaws proposed to limit large homes.

In October, MVYLI also sponsored a multicultural assembly at MVRHS, featuring Charlayne Hunter-Gault; and in August, the Walter Cronkite Awards, presented to people using the power of the media to build a more educated and sustainable world.

MVYLI also sponsors a college preparation and field trip program and has a partnership with the ACT College Testing Program, serving as a tutor and test proctor.

Sivana Brown told The Times, "The MVYLI has opened my eyes to things I wouldn't have known about. I know that the members will always be there for me."

For more information go to [mvyli.org](http://mvyli.org).