

SINCE 2005, A  
FELLOWSHIP-BASED  
GRANTS PROGRAM FOR  
ISLANDERS COMMITTED  
TO THE VINEYARD'S  
ENVIRONMENTAL AND  
SOCIAL SUSTAINABILITY



SEE [WWW.VINEYARDDVISION.ORG](http://WWW.VINEYARDDVISION.ORG)  
FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT  
THE PROGRAM, THE FELLOWS,  
AND HOW TO APPLY

The Martha's Vineyard Vision Fellowship is a grassroots catalyst for promising, passionate Islanders who are committed to the environmental and social sustainability of the Vineyard. The Vision Fellowship's financial awards empower emerging leaders and change makers to attain their educational and professional development goals. Fellowships also may be awarded for self-designed, Island-based projects and social enterprises within the program's areas of interest, all of which are listed on page 6. The Vision Fellowship emphasizes information sharing and collaboration across disciplines and places special emphasis on building strong relationships with Island-based nonprofits and progressive for-profits in the program's areas of interest.

## VISION FELLOWSHIP FAST FACTS

### Fellowship Awards to Date

The Vision Fellowship has awarded 100 fellowships to 99 people (three people were repeat fellows) since its inception. Of those, 45 were graduate students or professional development fellows, 22 were project-based and 33 were undergraduates.

### Current Fellows

Twenty-six people are currently Fellows: eight are in graduate school; five are project-based Fellows; and 15 are undergraduates.

### Sustainability Areas of Interest

See page 6 for the program's specific areas of interest and for a visual breakdown of the number of Fellows by sustainability area.

### Sponsoring Organizations

The Island's nonprofits and progressive for-profits who employ Fellows or for whom Fellows volunteer or intern are the Vision Fellowship's 'sponsoring' organizations. Of the 37 sponsoring organizations to date, 15 have sponsored more than one Fellow. As examples, Martha's Vineyard Hospital has sponsored six Fellows, Island Grown Initiative has sponsored ten, and BiodiversityWorks has sponsored five.

### Advisory Council

In September 2018, an Advisory Council to the Vision Fellowship Grants Committee convened to assess underserved island needs and to recommend possible fellowships to address those needs.

The Council's work is designed to inform and refine the Vision Fellowship's grant making practices and to help strengthen connections within the Vision Fellowship community.

The Advisory Council's first report to the Grants Committee will be the topic of the Vision Fellowship community's next...

**Vision Fellowship Gathering, to be held on Tuesday, April 23rd, at 5:30 p.m. at the West Tisbury Library.**

### Community and Collaboration

The Vision Fellowship encourages communication and collaboration with other members of the Vision Fellowship community, and with the broader Island community.

## WAIT! WHAT HAPPENED NEXT??

A universal characteristic of each Vision Fellow is a clearly demonstrated and passionate commitment to make a positive impact on the Vineyard's social and environmental landscape. A Vision Fellowship goal is that each Fellow will leverage his or her award to enable that outcome. Here are several outstanding examples of Vision Fellow alums who epitomize this.



### Elizabeth Baldwin, a two-time Vision Fellow.

Liz Baldwin is a wildlife biologist and assistant director of BiodiversityWorks, an Island nonprofit with focuses on wildlife research and monitoring, and on mentoring high school and college students interested in science and wildlife biology. Growing up on-Island, Liz was interested in these subjects but didn't have the opportunity to work with a local biologist until she got to college. She is thrilled that through BWorks she is able to provide this opportunity to island students as well as do what she loves: wildlife research and conservation. Liz first became a Vision Fellow in 2009 when she was awarded a Fellowship to support her pursuit of a Master's Degree in Conservation Biology at Antioch University New England in Keene, NH. For her thesis, she used trail cameras to look at

behavior and population characteristics of the North American River Otter here on the Vineyard. This was part of a larger community-based project that examined the river otters' role as sentinels for habitat and water quality.

In spring 2011, Liz and her mentor Luanne Johnson founded BiodiversityWorks. In 2015, they were both awarded a Vision Fellowship to study the Northern long-eared bat (MYSE) distribution, roosting and migration behavior on Martha's Vineyard. This research gathered life history information for MYSE specific to Vineyard habitats. Martha's Vineyard, Nantucket, and Long Island may have the only remaining breeding populations of MYSE in the Northeast due to a fungus that has caused mass mortalities at winter hibernacula. The fellowship helped kick start this project and Luanne and Liz continue to research these rare bats with their collaborators to determine what mechanisms are allowing them to persist in these coastal regions. When they are not out chasing, they are protecting beach-nesting birds, tracking black racer snakes, mentoring youth and communicating their findings to the Vineyard community.



### Shelley Edmundson, Ph.D. and Whelk Specialist.

Shelley Edmundson started her Vineyard Vision Fellowship in January 2011 researching channeled whelks for her PhD in Zoology/Marine Biology at University of New Hampshire. Channeled whelks, nicknamed 'conchs,' are local marine snails that support one of the Vineyard's largest commercial fisheries. Throughout her research, Shelley collaborated with local fishermen to collect data and develop research experiments involving whelk growth rates (Fact: She tagged over 14,000 whelks!), movements (Fact: Whelks do not move too far!), early life history (Fact: Juvenile whelks incubate for 8 to 9 months!), and behavior (Fact: Whelks are primarily nocturnal feeders!).

After earning her doctorate in September 2016, Shelley became the Executive Director of the Martha's Vineyard Fishermen's Preservation Trust (MVFPT), an Island non-profit organization that was established to help ensure the sustainability of the Vineyard's commercial fishing community, its heritage, and its access to local seafood for generations to come. Through her work with the MVFPT, Shelley continues to work in collaboration with the island's fishermen toward the common goal of realizing the promise of healthy fish stocks and thriving fishermen now and in the future.

Shelley's work is featured in an episode of Film-Truth Production, Inc.'s Sustainable Martha's Vineyard documentary series, created by Liz Witham and Ken Wentworth, both 2015 Vision Fellows. The episode is entitled 'The Secret Lives of Conch'. View the film at: <https://vimeo.com/channels/1062054/213554125>.

WHAT HAPPENED NEXT?? CONTINUED



**Antone Lima, Conservation Land Assistant.**

In his own words:

After graduating from Martha's Vineyard Regional High in 2012, I had grand plans to engineer the Island out of dilemmas such as nitrogen pollution, waste management, and climate change. I had these goals because I valued the land, wildlife, people, and uniqueness of Martha's Vineyard. It all made me want to solve some of the pressing issues that threatened the island's complex socio-ecological fabric. With support from the Fellowship, I went to the University of New Hampshire to study Environmental Engineering. Introductory engineering courses were incredibly interesting, but there was something missing. It wasn't until I took a discovery course in environmental and resource economics perspectives that I realized you can spend a lifetime engineering solutions to problems, but how do you prevent the problem in the first place or get these solutions implemented? This insight led me to change course and work towards earning my degree in Environmental Conservation and Sustainability. In this new path, I thoroughly enjoyed a range of courses that opened my eyes to the boundless ecosystem and human interactions that

require careful planning for future resilience.

Since earning my degree in 2016, I have been working with organizations like the Trustees and now the Martha's Vineyard Land Bank Commission to protect and manage areas of exceptional ecological value and provide access to places with unique island character. I also serve on the Oak Bluffs Parks Commission helping to manage the town's iconic public parks and recreational facilities. Land-use change is arguably the greatest threat to the island's socio-ecological fabric. Protecting and managing these places helps to mitigate the impacts of land-use change and provides me a platform to advocate for current action and future solutions.

Most Recently, I began serving on the Fellowship's Advisory Council to the Grants Committee and pursuing my masters in Resource Management and Conservation from Antioch University New England part time. It has been incredibly rewarding to be able to directly apply leadership and research outreach skills learned at school to the Advisory Council. Through both pursuits, I hope to bring light to Island issues that are underserved or unmet and develop ways to personally and organizationally advance progress across many disciplines. The Fellowship community has helped me tremendously in becoming an effective leader in maintaining the unique nature of Martha's Vineyard for future generations.

**MIDCAREER MILESTONE FOR CASEY BLUM!**



Congratulations to Casey Blum, a 2017 Vision Fellow! Casey graduated in December of 2018 with dual master's degrees in Social Work and Outdoor Education from the University of New Hampshire. Since graduation, she has become a Licensed Certified Social Worker in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, and plans to work part time at Community Services doing mental health evaluations for individuals in crisis. In addition to this work, Casey is the co-founder and program director for a Vineyard based nonprofit organization, FUEL. FUEL will offer college curriculum in an experiential framework onboard a world-voyaging sailing ship. Through life-changing journeys, students will discover their personal potential. Casey's sailing background began aboard the Black Dog Tall Ship Alabama, where she worked for over ten seasons and became the first ever female captain for the company. Through her work with FUEL, Casey hopes to preserve the unique sailing culture on Martha's Vineyard and to pass down the maritime arts to the next generation.



## UNDERGRADUATE UPDATES

**The Vision Fellowship program takes a long view regarding its undergraduate Fellows. Young students often benefit from gaining education and experience elsewhere, so a commitment to move home after graduation is not emphasized. However, undergraduates are encouraged to develop strong mentor relationships wherever they go and to maintain meaningful ties with the Island and the Vision Fellowship community.**



**Marcelle Alves**, a 2016 Vision Fellow, is a junior at the University of Arizona. She is majoring in Political Science and minoring in Africana Studies with a goal to become an Immigration lawyer. Marcelle spent this past summer interning with attorney Rebecca McCarthy for her third consecutive summer. She also assisted teaching students grade K-8 during the Martha's Vineyard English Language Learners Summer Program 2018. During this time, she worked with ELL Director Leah Palmer in creating an Education Rights Brochure that was distributed throughout island-wide schools this past fall in both English and Portuguese. Marcelle is currently working at the the University of Arizona Immigration Resource Center as a college navigator. In this position, she helps provide academic, career, scholarship, and social support to currently enrolled students including students with mixed-immigration status families, and students from refugee backgrounds. Marcelle will be taking the LSATS in June and applying to law schools in the fall of 2019 to move forward with her education with a plan to become an immigration lawyer in the future and to help the immigrant community on Martha's Vineyard.

**Connor Downing**, a 2016 Vision Fellow, in his own words: I'm currently in my third year at Lehigh University, majoring in Earth and Environmental Science. For the past two semesters I've been doing field research with a few classmates on a creek near Lehigh. A pipeline is proposed to be built across the creek in the near future. We're taking preliminary data of the creek so that we can measure the effects of pipeline construction on a small waterway. This past January, I traveled to Costa Rica for a class in sustainability and development. For three weeks we traversed Costa Rica, meeting many locals and learning how they have adapted to an ecotourism economy in rural areas. I came away from the trip with a better understanding of the history of Costa Rica and an admiration for the success of the many entrepreneurs there.

For the Fellowship, I've been working with Doug Cooper at Cooper Environmental for the past three summers. With Doug I've learned about septic systems and wetland delineation. I have also spent a summer with Luanne Johnson and Liz Baldwin at BiodiversityWorks. This upcoming summer I plan to take a Field Camp class which will span the month of June and will include traveling around Idaho and Wyoming to learn about the geology there.



**Sara Poggi**, a 2016 Vision Fellow, is currently a junior at the University of South Carolina majoring in Exercise Science and on the pre-medicine track. In her own words: This past January, I traveled to Tena, Ecuador with an organization called MEDLife. In Tena, I and 34 other USC students set up medical clinics in rural communities that didn't have access to proper medical care. I worked closely with doctors and nurses, providing medical services, dental care, and educational workshops to individuals and families in need. On this trip, we also worked at a school to construct a kitchen for the students and teachers to use. Back on campus, I work with MEDLife to help develop awareness and inform students of what this organization is all

about. I also volunteer every week at my local hospital in the Emergency Department where I take vitals, transport patients, and help the staff in any way that I can. This has helped me create connections in the medical community and allowed me to shadow health care providers in various settings. I also have gained knowledge on what each field of medicine entails which is helpful in determining what area I want to have a career in. Along with MEDLife and volunteering, I am involved in other organizations such as the Public Health Society, Dance Marathon, an event where students stand for 14 hours to raise money for Children's Miracle Network Hospitals (over \$1 million was raised this year alone), and Zeta Tau Alpha Sorority where I serve as my chapter's service chair. This summer I am hoping to spend more time shadowing and working with doctors on Martha's Vineyard as well as getting trained to be an EMT to prepare myself and get patient care hours needed for Medical School.

## WHERE ARE THEY NOW?

Sometimes, a Vision Fellow's journey requires the pursuit of off-Island opportunities that simply are not available here. These Fellows remain connected to the Island and to the Vision Fellowship community and their work 'away' has a ripple effect at home.



### Taza Vercruysse

Taza Vercruysse, a 2011 Vision Fellow, currently works at Cervello, in the seaport area of Boston, as a Manager in their NEXT practice. Cervello specializes in helping customers use their data to drive insights into their business as well as designing and developing custom software to help meet strategic initiatives. Taza's responsibilities primarily consist of running development teams (small and large) that are building custom applications and software for various clients, including the Fortune 500, academic institutions, and others in the retail and financial industries. He also runs various internal initiatives, interfaces with clients, and also does selling, R&D, design work, and proofs of concepts.

In addition to his work at Cervello, Taza also founded and is currently COO of Innovations, a full-service web and mobile app development and marketing company that specializes in humanizing the web. Their work ranges from bottom-up website design and development to search engine optimization to mobile app development. Taza leads the teams creating, developing, and implementing these solutions, and is also the go-between for the clients and development teams. View their portfolio and current work at <https://waypointinnovations.com>.

Taza's Vision Fellowship award supported his junior and senior years at Boston University where he majored in Environmental Studies. During his summers as a Fellow, he interned with Vineyard Power where he trained in various energy technologies. He also researched wind and energy policy, did database development and public outreach, helped to grow the co-op membership base, and learned about solar and smart grid initiatives. Before working with Vineyard Power, Taza spent five summers working for South Mountain Company, where he helped build ecologically conscience housing and learned about integrating solar panels, wind turbines and energy efficient heating and cooling systems into building design.



### Lenora Wilcox, in her own words:

Late last fall, my wife and I moved back to the Vineyard to raise our son in one of the most magical places on earth. At least, that was my experience growing up on Island and it is what I wish for my own child. In 2005, I began working at Island Elderly Housing and I became disillusioned by the gaps in service for elderly residents. I saw many have to leave the island to find affordable housing. In 2007, I became a grateful recipient of the MV Vision Fellowship and graduated from the School of Social Service Administration at the University of Chicago in 2009 with a Masters in Social Work. After, I worked in NYC with the homeless population for two years. I then worked in Providence, RI, at Crossroads RI, assisting people experiencing

homelessness get back into housing.

When my son was born in 2015, I was the Director of Assessment and Shelters at Crossroads during an exciting time, as the organization had undergone a major shift from emergency shelter services to housing as the solution to homelessness. However, the best of motherhood took hold of my heart and I resigned from my job to be a stay at home mom. I have been privileged to be able to spend these magical years with my son and am grateful to my loving wife for being the sole breadwinner. We are in the process of building our forever home on a piece of land in West Tisbury that has been in my family for 200 years. When our son enters preschool this coming fall, I will be ready to re-enter the workforce and contribute in new ways to this beautiful community. I am so happy to call the Island home once again.

2005-2018  
**100 VISION FELLOWS TO DATE**

The numbers, by SUSTAINABILITY AREAS OF INTEREST

- 3 Affordable Housing
- 9 Alternative and Renewable Energy
- 15 Conservation and Biodiversity
- 22 Education, including Environmental Education
- 26 Health Care (including Mental Health), Social and Elder Services
- 5 Island Cultures
- 6 Shellfish and Fishery Management and Conservation
- 8 Sustainable Agriculture
- 2 Sustainable Architecture/Built Environment
- 0 Transportation Alternatives
- 2 Water (including Nitrogen Management and Water Resources)
- 2 Waste (including Composting and Recycling)

One last, but not least, Vision Fellow Update: Peg Regan and The Martha's Vineyard Master Teacher Institute for Teaching and Learning, a two-year pilot.



Peg Regan was awarded a 2018 Vision Fellowship so that she could plan and implement a Master Teacher Institute that takes place on-Island each July for local and off-Island teachers.

The Institute utilizes 'lesson study' to improve teaching skills. Lesson study is a professional development process that Japanese teachers engage in to systematically examine their practice, with the goal of becoming more effective. The teachers work collaboratively on a small number of study lessons. They plan, teach, observe, and critique the lessons. During the summer institute, the teachers, in a collaborative lab school environment, take turns using the study lessons to teach students enrolled in summer school at Martha's Vineyard Regional High School. The other teachers observe the lesson and the group then comes together to discuss their observations. Ultimately, the teachers produce a report of what their study lessons have taught them, particularly with respect to their initial research question. "Effective teaching is not easy to achieve," says Peg. "In fact, becoming an excellent teacher takes one's full career. Our work each

summer is to improve instruction for all kids through collaboration as professionals."

The inaugural summer institute in July 2018 included seven teachers with diverse backgrounds and experiences. The effects of this month-long seminar are lasting: One teacher remarked, "I have walked away from this experience with a renewed desire to do even more than I already do to meet each student where they are, to create an engaging classroom environment and involve students in discussion." In addition, the students truly enjoyed the variety of approaches in class. Carlos, a tenth grade boy who failed freshmen English, was enthusiastic. "I enjoy these discussions more when everyone is thinking on the same book, so we are able to break down what a novel means," he observed. For more information about the 2019 Institute, visit: <http://www.masterteacherinstitute.com>