

**PRESS RELEASE: For Immediate Release | December 14, 2020**

## **School COVID Testing Program funded by local charities in a public private partnership**

Funded by private donations and school funds, Martha's Vineyard School testing program will be among the first and most comprehensive primary school testing initiatives in the State of Massachusetts.

The program's goal is to take proactive measures to identify and respond to COVID-19 in the school community. "Our top priority is for students to safely attend school in person. Until we have a widely available vaccine or treatment, systematic testing is an important part of our ability to provide the best educational experience," stated Superintendent Matthew D'Andrea.

The total project budget is \$462,150. Funding has been secured from both public and private donations. The MV Public School system committed \$150,000 to the testing effort. Martha's Vineyard Bank Charitable Foundation contributed \$100,000 and agreed to be the fiscal agent for the project. MVYouth, a charitable organization supporting youth on Martha's Vineyard contributed the final \$212,150 to the project.

"The school testing program will enable our school administrators to make more informed decisions about when to open and close schools, added school committee member, Alex Salop. "It will also provide a measure of comfort to staff, parents, and students that we are closely monitoring the existence of COVID-19 in the schools."

The school will undergo surveillance testing using pool-based PCR (Polymerase Chain Reaction) tests, sometimes called "the gold standard" of testing, and subsequent individual PCR tests to identify positive individuals. PCR tests detect genetic material that is specific to the COVID-19 virus and can identify the virus within days of infection, even in asymptomatic cases. The tests are completed at home using a simple saliva collection kit and then returned to the school, where they're overnighted to a specialized lab for analysis. The at-home saliva testing method is faster, more convenient, safer, and more easily accessed by both students and staff.

In addition to identifying individuals who test positive for COVID-19, regular testing in the schools benefits the entire community. All positive results will be included with community testing data as required by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. In addition, while significant research demonstrates that positivity rates within schools are considerably lower than those of the surrounding community, having more data about COVID in the Martha's Vineyard schools will be of tremendous assistance to health officials on the island.

"The Martha's Vineyard Bank Charitable Foundation continues to find innovative ways to support our community through the Pandemic," stated President and CEO James M. Anthony. "We are proud to support a school testing program designed to enable the education of our children in these difficult times."

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### **About Martha's Vineyard Bank**

Martha's Vineyard Bank is a full-service bank headquartered in Edgartown, Massachusetts. The Bank operates 11 offices and 17 ATMs on Martha's Vineyard and in Falmouth. With over a century-long tradition of providing financial services, Martha's Vineyard Bank reports \$844 million in total assets as of year end 2019. Martha's Vineyard Bank deposits are insured through the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation (FDIC) and the Depositor's Insurance Fund (DIF).

For more information visit [www.mvbank.com](http://www.mvbank.com) or contact:

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### **About MVYouth**

MVYouth is a charitable organization on Martha's Vineyard that supports Island youth through two programs, Expansion Grants and College & Workforce Development Scholarships. Founded in 2014, MVYouth has already invested over \$10M into the youth community. MVYouth is currently supported by 70 Founders who make a four-year pledge to contribute \$25,000/year and cover an equal portion of the organization's operating expenses. MV Bank has been one of MVYouth's Founders since its inception.

For more information visit [www.mvyouth.com](http://www.mvyouth.com) or contact:

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