



# About U.S.

## Message from the Head of School

In early April I took advantage of one of the few warm days to take a walk on campus. My excuse was to check the school's woods for trout lilies and to see if the mallards had arrived on our property yet. I knew that our students had been watching for signs of them, and I was just as eager to find them as they scoped out their first nesting spot of the season. Honestly, though, I was also simply looking for a much-needed mental break from some now-forgotten mental task. As I walked across the playground to the woods, I noticed that the second grade had also decided to come out for a break from their work and were playing along the edge of the woods.

"Hey, Ms. Lauer, want to see our village?" a second grader yelled. Before I knew it, I was touring a grand complex which was, according to my second grade guide, the site of their upcoming festival. There was a carefully constructed campfire rimmed with river rocks for cooking the imaginary food they would sell and an impressive pile of wood to fuel it. Further down the edge of the field was an area for "training" with logs for jumping over and paths for running on. Several trees had been scoped out as markers for living areas. Everyone in the class was busy carving out this world that fifteen minutes before had only been a thought.

Ms. Leavy had brought her class outside to take an afternoon recess break because she, like all good teachers, knows that the best way to improve class performance and heighten *directed* attention is to get kids out of the class and into fresh air and nature where their *involuntary* attention can take over and give their brains a recharging. Countless studies, from those at Albert Einstein College of Medicine to researchers reporting in *The Journal of School Health* at Harvard University, have supported the fact that unstructured play, or recess as schools call it, is a vital component of academic success.

In addition to improving academic achievement, the opportunity for free play, unguided by adults, is also crucial to a

child's social development. Everyone acknowledges that this is true in early childhood. We all recognize that "play with a purpose" is part of the pre-school world, where teachers use play to guide children from parallel play to cooperative play and to then develop creativity and readiness for math and literacy. But the purpose of play follows children into the grades, and the forms it takes serve not only academic but also vital social roles. When kids play, they learn and practice social cues, they

learn how to bargain and cooperate, and they gain resiliency. When the second graders invited me to see what they were doing, they clearly did not see their work as play. With no instructions or guidance from their teacher, they had decided on a goal, chosen roles and worked feverishly as a group to accomplish that goal before they had to go back inside to their classwork. What wasn't finished remained tucked in the backs of their minds for completion at the next opportunity...and I can assure you that it was work that they looked forward to doing.



*Fourth graders are also creative builders during their outdoor time!*

Last spring a mallard laid her clutch of eggs right under the slide, and it became an outdoor science center until the June day when the eggs hatched and the duck led her chicks to the brook. If she returns this spring, daily observation of her nest will simply fit into the many other games, building projects, swinging and chatting that make up the crucial business of outdoor play.

When our school was founded in 1917, its fresh air philosophy was based on intuition, without the benefit of brain scans and research that now link free play to academic and social success. How wonderful it is that ninety two years later we have concrete support for getting outside and running around!

***Sharon Lauer***

## Trimester II, 2008-2009

### Unquowa Honors

(no grade below A and no effort grade below a 3)

Grade 5

**Victoria Clarke**  
**Daniel Leszczynski**  
**Jaeden McKenzie**

Grade 6

**Alexander Burdo**  
**Tatum Hughes**  
**Elizabeth Kremer**  
**Deborah Leszczynski**  
**Mary Spodnick**  
**Abigail Winter**

Grade 7

**Bailey Cooke**  
**Charles Jersey**  
**Erica Meno**  
**Tristan Schietinger**

Grade 8

**Matthew Kresch**  
**Nadia Makhraz**  
**Max Martone**  
**Mark Watson**

### Honor Roll

(B+ average with no grade below B and and no effort grade below a 3)

Grade 5

**Rachael Anzalone**  
**Justin Blanchette**  
**Caroline Guterl**  
**Sassine Makhraz**  
**Michael Proto**  
**Erin Reilly**  
**Patrick Tennant**

Grade 6

**Jennee Blanco**  
**Vikram Chaudhuri**  
**Andrew Godfrey**  
**Jennifer Godfrey**  
**Nicole Grabe**  
**Danielle Greenawalt**  
**Katherine Halas**  
**Morgan Hansen**  
**Spencer Jordan**  
**Gemma Lein-McDonough**  
**Katherine Sommers**  
**Winston Stalowir**  
**Christopher Taylor**  
**Claire Tetenbaum**  
**Devin Weiner**  
**Jack Weiss**

Grade 7

**Davis Baer**  
**Kai Burton**  
**Grace Carapezzi**  
**Peta-Gay Clayton**  
**Alexis Genovese**  
**Marc Thomas Greenawalt**  
**Amy Greenberg**  
**Charles Haviland**  
**Mackenzie Murray**  
**Jeremiah Starke**  
**Katherine Viteretto**  
**Gregory Weiner**

Grade 8

**Rajane Brown**  
**Kamau Burton**  
**Nicole Derek**  
**Brandon Hylton**  
**Joshua Knopf**  
**Taylor Lopez-Balboa**  
**Rachel McDermott**  
**Catherine McNeela**  
**Seth Samowitz**  
**Jillian Thornton**

## Welcome!

### Lisa Magrone

We are pleased to welcome our new nurse, Lisa Magrone. She will be working Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays replacing Ms. Lechich who is now at Fairfield High.



## Congratulations



Amy Greenberg, grade 7, is a member of the New Canaan Aquinas Synchronized Swim Team. Her team won silver medals in the Connecticut qualifier in April. Amy placed 4th individually out of 60 girls in the 13 and older category.

Congratulations, Amy and good luck to you and your team at the Regional Championships in May!

## Congratulations

Ms. Hellman has been granted a wonderful opportunity to begin working towards her master's degree at the renowned Oxford University in Oxford, England. She will be pursuing a master's degree in Medieval and Modern Languages this autumn, focusing on the role of women in Romance Language Literatures.

Ms. Hellman will finish the school year by chaperoning the Costa Rica trip this summer and conducting an Improv Clinic here in July.

Ms. Hellman wants everyone to know that she is eternally grateful to each and every member of the Unquowa community for such a wonderful year of teaching and learning together, and she will miss everyone immensely.





## Celebrating Earth Day at Unquowa



Unquowa celebrated Earth Day on April 17 with presentations and activities throughout the day. Lower School's day started with a presentation by the Audubon Center and some of Connecticut's native animals. Students learned that the Albino Corn Snake they met has a hard time surviving because it can't find an environment where it can blend in. In contrast, the Painted Turtle, another Connecticut native, has adapted well to its environment. Students also got a chance to meet an Asian Red Eared Spider, a species that is not native to the area. This led to a discussion about buying exotic pets and not knowing how to care for them. The Garbage Museum discussed reducing, recycling, and vermicomposting. Students participated in a sorting activity separating trash from recyclable objects.

After lunch with their Upper School partner, some students spent time identifying native and invasive species on our campus, while others did a rate of flow investigation of the Horse Tavern Brook and London's Brook. Upper Schoolers also met some creatures that live at the Audubon Center — a Fire-bellied Toad, Yellow Spotted Turtle and a tarantula. They also met and listened to Colin Carlson, a 12 year old University of Connecticut student who has been an agent of change in his home town of Coventry. His passion for the environment and the small steps everyone can take to make a difference left a lasting impression.

In the afternoon, Grades 5, 6, 7, and 8 made the earth a better place by going to Jennings Beach and picking up enough litter to fill 20 bags of garbage from the dunes that surround the beach. Earth Day 2009 at Unquowa was a day for learning about and caring for the environment in an active, fun-filled way.

*Mrs. Sullivan*

## People to People

G'day ambassadors! Most of you do not know, but this summer I am heading to Australia for three weeks. I am very excited about my trip, but this is not a vacation. Instead, I am traveling as a teacher leader with an organization called People to People.

People to People was founded in 1956 by President Eisenhower to promote peace through cultural exchange and understanding. People to People is not a tour company. Rather, it provides unique educational experiences, and students are led by qualified educators. In addition to learning about the culture of each country visited, students study history, civics, and geography, all while developing leadership and citizenship skills. It is a wonderful program that I am proud to be a part of.

Krissy Sabol is also a teacher leader with People to People and will be leading a group of delegates throughout the Mediterranean this summer. Our own Rajane Brown, grade 8, has been nominated and chosen to attend the 2010 People to People Leadership Seminar at Harvard University.

People to People is always looking for highly qualified candidates to travel as ambassadors. If you think you are one of them, please contact me, sleavy@unquowa.org for more information! Happy travels!

*Stefanie Leavy*

## Student Take Over



Two of the teacher experiences purchased at last year's auction — Math Teacher for the Day and Chef for the Day — were fulfilled in April.

Eighth grader, Max Martone, took over Mrs. Haseltine's sixth grade math class and taught a geometry lesson on calculating the area of a circle.

Second graders, Carolyn and Katharine Riffice, worked with Chef Peter to provide a delicious lunch of grilled salmon with mashed potatoes and asparagus. The dessert of chocolate cookie bars was delicious!

Great job by all. Thank you to the parents for supporting Unquowa and to the teachers and staff for providing these opportunities.



## From the Library

On April 8, students in grades 1-6 welcomed alumna **Lauren Baratz-Logsted**, class of 1976, back to Unquowa. Lauren was very comfortable sitting in the library with our students and reminiscing about her experiences here. Mrs. Joan L. Miano was our Head of School, she took Latin as a foreign language, Field Day was the most popular special event day and there was no wall between the gym and the dining room when she was here. Our students got a chuckle over the idea of basketballs interrupting a meal. She also spoke about her English teacher, Mr. Chester Schnepf, who inspired her to write stories. He told her that writing is very powerful. Writing lets you express your ideas and is a good form of entertainment.



Lauren is the author of the *Sisters 8* series about eight sisters searching for their parents who disappeared. Throughout each book the girls are challenged to figure out the mystery of what happened to their parents, while keeping the rest of the world from realizing that they're living alone. We were very excited to hear first-hand how the girls were named and how their characteristics were determined. To date, there are four volumes published. We eagerly await the rest of the series and the special 9th volume that will tell us how the mysteries of all the adventures sort themselves out. After reading the *Sisters 8*, you can visit their site at [www.sisterseight.com](http://www.sisterseight.com) and take the quiz to find out which octuplet you are most like!

*Debbie Lietuvninkas*

## Learning Styles Identified

This year, sixth through eighth graders who are not in Learning Skills classes got a chance to study their own learning style. Learning Skills students assisted Mrs. Sabatini in teaching the other students to identify their learning style. There are three types of learning styles. The styles are Auditory, Visual and Tactile/Kinesthetic. Auditory applies to people who learn best by hearing or listening. Visual is learning best by seeing and Tactile/Kinesthetic is learning best by touching, feeling or moving. In the future, all students in seventh grade will learn their Dominant Learning Characteristic and eighth graders will learn about the Eight Intelligences. Learning about how one learns helps a student's ability to improve their learning.

*Marissa Leggiadro and Rachel McDermott, Grade 8*





# Unquowans Attend Student Diversity Leadership Conference

Every year around the first weekend in April, The Connecticut Association of Independent Schools (CAIS), in association with the Commission on Diversity Initiatives in Independent Schools (CODIS), holds a conference at one of 52 possible private school sites in Connecticut. This year it was held at Greens Farms Academy. Students and adults met to discuss, celebrate, and discover, through workshops and dialogue, how much they have in common and how wonderfully different they are. It is a journey worth following as our students build self esteem and awareness of their ever expanding global networks of identifiers.

Identifiers such as gender, race, ethnicity, religion, age, orientation, social economic range and ability are strands of diversity that unite us if we look through positive lenses. This conference treats each strand academically and shares perspectives through student experiences.

This year Unquowa sent 17 students to the conference. Approximately 390 participants attended. They enthusiastically contributed to workshops led by high school students, in addition to facilitators Kurtis Lamkin and LaVern Burton. Ms. Sabol documented the event through wonderful photography.

The guest speaker was Beau Sia, whose specialty is the art of slam poetry. Mr. Sia was born in the Philippines and is of Chinese Filipino decent. He was raised in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma and graduated from NYU Tisch School of the Arts and has performed across the country. He mesmerized the students with "frank talk" and his Asian perspective. Other opening and closing events were student driven performances from various backgrounds. All of our students agree that it was a special event and look forward to next year's conference.

*LaVern Burton, Diversity Coordinator*



## Robotics Expo



During the challenges, each school was allowed three tries on each challenge and if needed, could reprogram their robots between tries. The challenges consisted of three line following activities, a "get out of the box" challenge, and a collecting the cans challenge. I am proud to say that these boys were the only group out of the seven schools attending to complete all five challenges and all on the first try! They should be proud of all their hard work and how well they represented Unquowa! We look forward to next year's Robotics Expo!

*Lloyd Mitchell*

On April 18th, Andrew Godfrey, Jack Weiss and Winston Stalowir attended the first ever Fairfield County Robotics Expo, hosted this year by Fairfield Country Day School. Having spent the past several weeks preparing for the Expo, the boys were excited to put all their hard work to action. The expo consisted of trial time, exhibition time to show what types of unique projects each school was doing, and five challenges. During the trial time, the boys worked to perfect their programs and ensure that they would complete all the challenges. During the exhibition time, many students were drawn to the Unquowa table as other students were fascinated with the spin art robot, the dragster, and the line following robot that the boys had built for this exhibition.





## Enrichment Programs



The UPA sponsored a number of enrichment programs this spring. We enjoyed the storytelling of Antonio Rocha who took us through a jungle of fun through mime and storytelling into the forests of Brazil. The show was not only entertaining, but taught us a lot about Brazil and the rainforest.

Cool Cat Jazz, a New Orleans Dixieland and Swing Jazz Band, took us on a musical journey from the 1900's to the 1940's. They demonstrated each of their instruments, played examples of different music styles and taught us about the heroes of jazz.



Coro Fabretino, a children's choir from Nicaragua, performed songs and dances for us. After the performance, the students, ages 13 to 17, joined us for lunch and visited our classrooms. Classroom activities included teaching us Nicaraguan songs and games and answering our questions. The program was brought to us through Creative Connections, an International Cultural Exchange Organization.



## Students Take the Stage



May Day performances by Lower and Upper School students before the traditional May Pole Dancing, which had to be held inside due to the weather.



Students in grades K - 2 did a fantastic job performing "The Sky is Falling"



Seventh graders wrote and performed a play entirely in Spanish.



# Spring Athletics



## Girls' Lax

It was such a pleasure to arrive at every practice this spring to witness the girls' passion and joy for the game. Their enthusiasm inspired everyone. The team was led by the offense of Taylor Lopez-Balboa, Nadia Makhraz, Nicole Derek and Abby Winter. Grace Carapezzi, Catherine McNeela and Katherine Halas led the defense, while Katherine Viteretto kept us in all of the games with her strong goal play. Kai Burton and Jennee Blanco displayed strong leadership skills and they will be sorely needed next year, as there are big shoes to fill with the departure of our eighth graders. Nicole Derek, Nadia Makhraz, Catherine McNeela and Taylor Lopez-Balboa could always be counted on to represent our school and themselves so well. It has been our honor and privilege to coach you!

***Coach Donza and Coach B***



## Tennis

Enthusiasm for tennis at Unquowa is alive and well. The future of the program is very promising as the spring season comes to a successful close. Erica Meno continues to lead the school in winning matches and competitive spirit while Bailey Cooke and Kai Burton produced a winning doubles record this season. Each player has consistently represented the school with noteworthy sportsmanship and amazing efforts. We are very proud of our 6th graders as they await next year's match play experiences. Their commitment to practices was inspiring.

A special congratulations and thank you to the players that made this year's program a success: Seth Samowitz, Mark Watson, Kamau Burton, Rachel McDermott, Max Martone, Marissa Leggiadro, Matthew Kresch, Javante Cameron-Sheffield, Bailey Cooke, Erica Meno, Kai Burton, Jeremiah Starke, Grace Carapezzi, Greg Weiner, Alex Burdo, Spencer Jordan, Isabel Jordan, Gemma Lein-McDonough, Jack Weiss, Jennee Blanco, Winston Stalowir, and Mary Spodnick.

***Coach Burton and Coach Lawrence***



## Boys LAX

Boys' Lacrosse completed another successful clinic season. The boys have grown tremendously and their skills have developed nicely. Next year we hope to field a team to compete in the Fairchester League.

***Coach Mitchell***



## Future Stars

If you are a baseball fan and miss the purity of the game, then you would have loved coming out to watch our Future Stars. Every Thursday our "little ones" would come to learn the fundamentals of baseball. It was such a joy to watch them play a game of catch, learn how to field a grounder or to just get a piece of the ball as they hit the baseball with a bat. We look forward to seeing all of our Future Stars on The Little League fields soon!



## Class of 2009: Riding Into the Sunset

The Unquowa School's eighth grade embarked upon an extraordinary journey to Rocking Horse Ranch Resort from Tuesday, May 12th through Friday, May 15th. Located in Highland, New York, Rocking Horse Ranch is dedicated to insuring the happiness of all who enter its doors.

The freedom and joy offered by the hotel's vast and fruitful campus unlocked endless possibilities for our eighth grade. For the duration of their stay, they participated in various activities, sports, and social events. Horseback riding, archery, sharp shooting, tennis, banana boat rides, kickball, soccer, basketball, sliding through the waterslide in the outdoor pool, late night dancing, and maybe a few friendly pranks were some of the examples of fun they participated in during their stay.

Lucky enough to be surrounded by peers from other middle schools as well, the eighth grade made new friends, in addition to strengthening the ties they have with each other. Enjoying their stay immensely, they highly recommend this destination to the next eighth grade. Unquowa's class of 2009 will fondly remember their trip to Rocking Horse Ranch Resort as they transition to the next phase in their young adult lives.

***Mark Watson, Kamau Burton, and Miss Frenza***



*Thank you to all who donated so generously to our Appalachia Drive! Our eighth graders did a great job loading the truck. The Halas Family has arranged this annual drive, provided the pods to store the donations, organized the truck loading, and bought a pizza lunch for the eighth graders each year.*

## Math Olympiads

We have just completed our fourteenth year of participation in the Mathematical Olympiads for Elementary Schools, which provides challenging non-routine problems that stretch the abilities of upper elementary students. Our fifth and sixth grade students diligently employed a variety of strategies to complete a series of five contests from November to March.

Ten students received Olympiad patches for scoring 8 or more points out of a possible 25: fifth-graders Victoria Clarke, Daniel Leszczynski and Jaeden McKenzie and sixth-graders Alex Burdo, Vikram Chaudhuri, Andrew Godfrey, Elizabeth Kremer, Debbie Leszczynski, Mary Spodnick, and Chris Taylor.

Elizabeth Kremer received the school winner trophy.

Congratulations to all the participants on a successful year of problem solving!

***Lisa Haseltine***



## Starring ...

Rajane Brown, grade 8, did an incredible job playing Dorothy in the *WIZ* at Playhouse on the Green in May. The show was extended an extra week and a large contingent of Unquowans attended the first weekend. Great job, Rajane! You'll be on Broadway soon!





## From the U.P.A.

Thank you to everyone who helped with our 2009 UPA Spring Fundraiser. We decided to try something different this year - an Online Auction. None of us could have foreseen what happened with the economy since we made the decision in June '08 to do this type of event. In retrospect, we believe it will prove to be a good choice. We are all pleased with the auction results and especially with the enthusiastic bidding. The online auction significantly reduced our costs for a fundraiser. The depth and amount of donated items for our community to bid on was truly amazing. Thank you everyone who contributed to the event. We would like to especially thank Jessica Ryan - our chair of Ways and Means for her hard work and creative talents. Jessica had an energetic and resourceful team to help pull everything together - thank you very much, Co-Chair Mary Jean Basileo, Sue Tennant, Lynne Chapin, Kim Proto, Julie Spodnick, Maria Taylor and Sharon Lauter. We would also like to thank parents who contributed items and services to be auctioned. Our "Teacher Experiences" are always sought after items at our auctions and this year is no exception. Thank you to all the teachers who donated their talents and time to bring about some of the most creative experiences we have ever offered.

Every year, our list grows with names of people who have volunteered their time, talent and energy in creating and supporting many of the events here at school. It is amazing to see that even with everyone's extremely busy lives that they can find the time to help us whenever we ask. Your children benefited from so many unique experiences this year thanks to your hard work. You are all noticed and appreciated! Thank you.

Our new slate of officers and volunteers is almost filled, and we look forward an exciting and rewarding new school year. Have a wonderful summer and we'll see you in the fall.

*Joan Panagos and Marcie Lapido  
UPA Co-Presidents*

## Annual Funds

### Participation:

**100% Board of Governors**

**100% Faculty & Staff**

**64% Parents**

All funds go directly to our children to support the wonderful educational programs they enjoy.

Parents, please show your support of our school and join our faculty, staff and board members to reach 100% parent participation.

P3	44%	4	63%
P4	61%	5	33%
K	59%	6	60%
1	71%	7	74%
2	86%	8	81%
3	67%		

### *Remember:*

- Online giving via  
[www.unquowa.org/donate](http://www.unquowa.org/donate)
- Corporate matching gifts
- Pledges due June 30, 2009
- Donations are tax deductible

*Thank you to all who  
have given!*

## College Bound ....

The Unquowa class of 2005 is off to college. We wish them all the best!

Jesse Alpert - University of Miami

Pierce Ford - St. Lawrence University

Michael Healy - Norwalk Community College

Alice Lloyd - Dartmouth College

Sasha Mack - Cornell University

Thomas Ranocchia - American University

Sean Ryan - Fordham University

Anthony Smith - University of Rhode Island

Pieter Van Laer - University of Connecticut at Stamford

Bertie Wright - Boston University

We haven't been able to contact Toni Johnson, Valarie Vargas, or Axel Wallenberg.

Please contact Ms. Leidlein at [dleidlein@unquowa.org](mailto:dleidlein@unquowa.org) with any information.

## New Arrivals

Antara Bhargava, grade K, has a baby sister! Anika was born on March 24.

Ben Leitner, grade K, has a new baby brother. Max was born over our Spring Vacation.

Congratulations to the Bhargava and Leitner families. We're thrilled to see more baby Unquowans!

## Alumni News

**Toni Johnson**, class of 2005, was named MVP at Marvelwood School's girls' basketball team. Toni was not only their top scorer this year, but the top scorer in Marvelwood girls' basketball history. Way to go, Toni!



**Noelle Robinson**, class of 1995, was our DJ at the recent Upper School Social at the Easton Community Center. Noelle has been our DJ at previous socials and kept our students dancing! She is currently in grad school at Southern Connecticut State University.

## Welcome

Welcome to Carter Majmudar, our new PreK-3 student, who joined us at the end of March.

Contact information for his parents, Juliet and Ketan can be found in our on-line directory.



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## THE UNQUOWA SCHOOL



### June

Check our online calendar for the complete and constantly updated schedule, but dates to note include:

**Tuesday, June 2 - Thursday, June 4**

Upper School Exams

**Friday, June 5**

Upper School Exam make-up day

**Monday, June 8**

Noon Dismissal

**Tuesday, June 9**

Closing Ceremonies, 10:30

Noon Dismissal

Commencement, 5:00 p.m.

### Summer at Unquowa

Basketball Clinic: June 15-19

Farm Camp: June 22-July 17

CMC Music Camp: July 6-17 & July 27-Aug 7

Improv Theater Clinic: July 20-24

