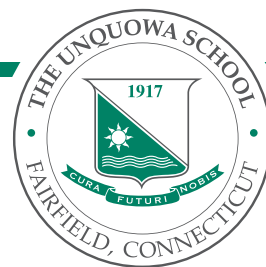


# About U.S.



A Publishing Tradition  
of The Unquowa School

## A Message from the Head of School

Winter Festival itself sometimes seems like a dim memory in January. Costumes and props are back in the closet, the gym floor has been freshly resealed after taking the beating of Brooklyn bleachers and the squeak of basketball shoes and bouncing balls replace that of choral practices and Morris dancers. But the lessons learned by mounting this show stay with each of our children — from dancing kindergarten cooks to string ensemble accompanists to seasoned tech crew members — long past December because, like so many other aspects of learning in our school year, they are cumulative lessons in character.

I believe that I have always looked forward to the Monday before Winter Festival the most because the first grade knight-ing ceremony, which is emblematic of the entire festival's purpose, takes place on that day. This ceremony brings our entire community together to witness each first grader being "knighted" for that quality by which

he or she wants to be known and which each of them worked hard to earn during the preceding month at both home and school. This past December, all of our first grade knights, including Cooper the Brave, Caroline the Honest and Lily the Responsible, stood with their classmates before the entire school, proud shoulders freshly touched by the king's knighting sword and hands draped with carefully crafted mantles that acknowledge their hard-earned adjectives.

While earning knighthood and protecting the kingdom has long been seen as the perfect role for first graders here at Unquowa during Winter Festival, recent understanding of brain maturation confirms why it is so. First grade, the beginning of middle childhood

that was once seen as the quiet spell between toddlers and teens, is now understood to be the beginning of a far more distinctive period of hormonal development in humans when the parts of the brain connected to our ability to control impulse, to reason and to plan for the future take hold. Teachers of children at these ages have always been able to confirm that the grades between early childhood and middle school are a developmental watershed for kids.

It's when they begin to understand how the desires of their friends fit with their own, when they are keen to understand and exercise the social rules of their community and when their general humanity begins to unfold in crucial ways in preparation for the subsequent hormonal challenges of puberty.

Spend thirty minutes in our dining room watching the fourth graders oversee the serving and clean-up of lunch and you will have no doubt that they relish their responsibility and have teamwork down to a science. Come to the dining room in the

half hour before school starts and witness a second grader helping a four year old to pack up and walk to class when the eight-thirty bell rings and you will be convinced of middle childhood generosity and compassion. Visit a class of third graders who are eagerly researching endangered species and you will see that they can not only conceive of their own futures but have a zest for saving the future of the larger world.

When these character strengths are celebrated and reinforced in authentic ways throughout childhood, they will surely be there to serve as a protective mantle when kids leave the watershed of middle childhood and head for the open waters of adolescence.



Some of our first grade knights during Winter Festival wearing their mantles to show the adjectives they chose to describe themselves.

*Sharon Lauer, Head of School*

## Trimester I Honor Roll Unquowa Honors

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

### Grade 6

Elizabeth Halas

### Grade 7

Ian Chapin  
Grace Haviland

### Grade 8

Daniel Leszczynski  
Sassine Makhraz

## Honors

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

### Grade 5

Rachel Albenze  
Nora Brennan  
Hannah Calzone  
Benjamin Chapin  
Mary Crooks  
Clara Horton  
Hailey Hughes  
Gianna Pinto  
Carson Solaz  
Siddharth Sunder  
Anna Uman

### Grade 6

Claire Abate  
Sara Adriani  
Devin Blanchette  
Elysse Cadoux  
Conner Calzone  
Derek Grabe  
Kyra Inston  
Maria Katsetos  
Maeve Kelly  
Ayana Klein  
Kailey Lauter  
Delaney Murray  
Marissa Proto  
Madelaine Register  
Olivia Seymour  
Alexander Stein  
Jae Stuhlman

### Grade 7

Sydnee Blanco  
Michael Brennan  
Victoria Giacobbe  
Taylor Hughes  
Tristan Murray  
Brandon Omisore  
Katherine Phelan  
Paul Pinto  
James Roland  
Evangelina Scianna  
Annie Lyn Sheketoff  
Brienne Simmonds  
Spencer Solaz  
Colin Spadinger  
Lily Stumpf  
Max Waghorne

### Grade 8

Olivia Albenze  
Rachael Anzalone  
Jessica Anzalone  
Justin Blanchette  
Gwyneth Feroletto  
Hannah Kehoe  
Erin Reilly  
Patrick Tennant

## 45% of Last Year's 4th-8th Graders Qualifield for the Johns Hopkins Center for Talented Youth



Each year the Johns Hopkins Center for Talented Youth conducts a search to identify students who score in the 95th percentile and above on a National Standardized Test such as the ERB's. Mrs. Sabatini, the coordinator of the CTY program at Unquowa, is pictured with 29 of the 47 students who qualified last spring.

## Progressive Education Lab Now Accepting Inquiries

Last spring, a collaboration involving Unquowa and three other progressive schools received a \$250,000 Education Leadership Grant from the Edward E. Ford Foundation to create the Progressive Education Lab (PEL), a visionary program that aims to change the landscape of how teachers prepare for their profession.

The partnership includes The Cambridge School of Weston, The Calhoun School, The Putney School and The Unquowa School. PEL is a one-year rotational program followed by a one-year paid internship at a choice of one of these four progressive schools. Unlike a traditional program, PEL joins a national movement to bring teacher training back into the schools where hands-on practical experience is emphasized.

Leaders from each school have begun to develop the program further and PEL is currently accepting inquiries from candidates for the fall of 2012 at [www.progressiveeducationlab.org](http://www.progressiveeducationlab.org).



## Thank You Mrs. Cahill

We are so grateful to music teacher Alyson Cahill who joined us in November to work with Mrs. Kirk in anticipation of Mrs. Kirk's maternity leave. When Mrs. Kirk's leave began earlier than expected, the day before our first Winter Festival show, Mrs. Cahill stepped in to co-direct the show with Mr. Mehinovic. Since the winter break she has been teaching Mrs. Kirk's music classes and leading the chorus. We are grateful for Mrs. Cahill's energy, teaching skills and talent.



## Phase Two - Renovations of Upper School Science Lab and Fifth Grade Classroom

The Campaign for Unquowa continues to build momentum towards the school's \$3 million goal with over \$900,000 in total commitments so far.

After completing Phase One last summer, the installation of a new roof and the renovation of our playing field, we are working hard to prepare for Phase Two this summer and to raise the funds still needed to make it possible.

***"We do labs every day in Upper School science. These improvements to the lab space will allow kids to conduct multi-day experiments in all areas of scientific study and having a greenhouse in the lab will let them explore the connections between botany, chemistry and genetics."***

- Craig Knebel, Upper School Science Teacher

Phase Two will bring the renovations inside where we are completely redesigning the Upper School Science Lab, installing new sprinklers and expanding the fifth grade classroom next to the lab. The architects' plans dramatically improve these two existing classrooms by carefully "capturing" underutilized spaces, including part of the large internal stairwell on that side of the building, to create additional academic space.

When Phase Two is completed, the Science Lab will be significantly

***"Learning by doing has always been the hallmark of our science program. The renovation of our science lab will have a tangible impact on student driven inquiry."***

- Sharon Lauer, Head of School

larger and will include improved lab stations and a small "bump out" greenhouse overlooking the field. Enlarging the fifth grade classroom will provide much needed space for our growing Upper School.

The funds we raise this winter will guide the Board's decision about the timing of Phase Two - we are optimistic that it will be this summer, but we need your help to get there.

While we remain focused on our larger goal of raising \$3 million for campus projects and the school's endowment, breaking the projects into phases means these exciting renovations can happen along the way.

To the many parents, alumni, grandparents and former families who have already made a commitment to The Campaign for Unquowa, thank you! If you have not yet made a three year pledge to the campaign, this is a great time to join us!

***"We believe that science touches everything. We're excited to help create an environment that will further stimulate the children's curiosity and love of the sciences at Unquowa."***

- Steve and Joan Panagos

Donors Who Have "Named" the Upper School Science Lab



### Founding Family Supports The Campaign for Unquowa

How exciting to have received support from three alumni who are all children of one of the Founding Families of Unquowa! Thank you to Brandon Stoddard, Anne Stoddard Patterson and Cecily Stoddard Stranahan for your generosity and for honoring your family's legacy at The Unquowa School.

### Thank you Grandparents!

We all know that grandparents are special, but did you know that Unquowa grandparents have given a total of \$40,000 to The Campaign for Unquowa so far? WOW! Thank you for supporting your grandchildren's school. And a special "thank you" to Jill Kelly, our Grandparent Chair and alumna from the Class of 1945.



## PreK-3 Study Food for Native Americans

Years ago the Unquowa Indians found much of their food in Long Island Sound. What better way for our PreK-3 students to study some of these foods than to get a real fisherman to help. Our own Mr. Doug spent time with both classes to cut up some porgies, open up some mussels and closely examine a live lobster. The children loved learning about sea creatures. We opened their mouths and looked at their big eyes. Then Mr. Doug showed the children what is inside a fish — bones, stomach, gills and more. We wore gloves and asked lots of questions. A big thank you to Mr. Doug for a great lesson.

*Janice Shannon, PreK-3 Teacher*



## American Mathematics Contest

Back in November, our sixth, seventh and eighth graders participated in the American Mathematics Contest along with more than 2200 other schools. The AMC is a 25-question, multiple-choice test. The related high school contest is part of the series of competitions that leads to the IMO (International Mathematical Olympiad.)

At assembly on January 4, Mrs. Haseltine announced the results. In third place we had a tie between seventh-grader Paul and eighth-grader Gwyneth. Seventh-grader Ian placed second and the school winner was eighth-grader Hannah, who received a school winner pin and whose name is now on the school AMC plaque.

Congratulations to everyone who participated for their excellent effort and achievement!

*Lisa Haseltine, Math Teacher*



## Graphic iPod Silhouettes

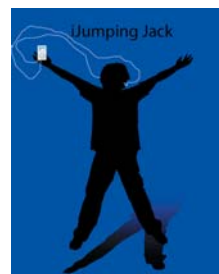


For their first graphic design project and introduction into the digital world of Photoshop, students in sixth grade transformed their portraits into silhouettes reminiscent of the famous iPod ads.

Starting with a digital picture, the students learned how to create a path around their bodies, cut and paste into a new layer, change the background color, desaturate and silhouette, and finally add a realistic shadow and even an iPod or two.

Some students this year got really creative with adding elements to create a wonderfully wacky world. Finally, they had to come up with a "title" that was representative of their image.

*Krissy Ponden, Art & Graphic Design Teacher*



## Museum Collaboration Update

### Pond Study at the Audubon

Recently, the second graders visited the Audubon Society in Fairfield to participate in the "Pond's Alive" program. They learned more about animals that live in and near the Larsen Sanctuary, a freshwater habitat. They also learned more about how animals survive in their habitat and animal adaptations. Did you know that snakes and other reptiles have scales to protect their body from rocks and other hard materials on the ground? And that a duck has a protective covering that keeps its body dry as it swims in water? After an interesting discussion, the students moved outside to discover and identify living things in the pond. We had a lot of fun discovering small insects and trying to identify them. We also saw a turkey vulture!

*Stefanie Leavy, Second Grade Teacher*



### Eighth Grade Collaboration with New Beginnings Academy at the Fairfield Museum and History Center

Beginning in the fall the eighth grade embarked on a collaborative project with the Fairfield Museum and History Center and New Beginnings Family Academy in Bridgeport. The objective of the project was to propose uses for buildings and vacant lots in downtown Bridgeport that would help revitalize Main St. and meet the goals for the city's "BGreen 2020" initiative.



The collaboration began with a trip to the Fairfield Museum and History Center where students met the fifth graders from New Beginnings whom they would mentor throughout the project.

The students met photographers Jay Mesencik and Geralene Valentine who contributed to a recent exhibit at the museum about Bridgeport theatre landmarks. They also met with photographer Craig Norton who spoke with the students about how to take



architectural pictures from different perspectives.

During their next outing the students from both schools went on a walking tour of Main St. in Bridgeport. They were supplied with cameras and each group, consisting of both Unquowa and New Beginning's students, focused on a specific building or lot and photographed different aspects of the space. They were joined by historian Charles Brilvitch who spoke about the city's history. Students then returned to New Beginnings where they worked together to come up with proposed uses for their space.

The students' artwork and written proposals, an exhibit entitled "Our Nation's Generations 2012: Sustainable Cities," will be on display at the Fairfield Museum and History Center through April. Look for an article on the students' final proposals and the museum exhibit in the spring issue of the *About U.S.*

*Debbie Leidlein, History Teacher*

## Geography Bee

Upper School students, parents and faculty gathered in the library in January for the annual school wide Geography Bee. After competitions within each fifth through eighth grade class, the two winners from each of those grades competed by answering questions provided by National Geographic. This year's school winner was seventh grader Max, second place went to Mary in fifth grade and third place to Delaney in sixth grade.

*Debbie Leidlein, History Teacher*

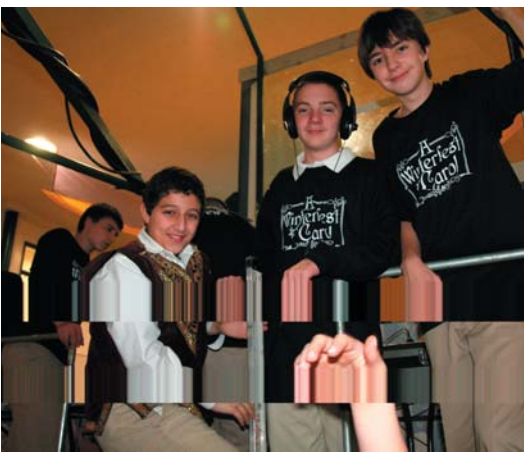
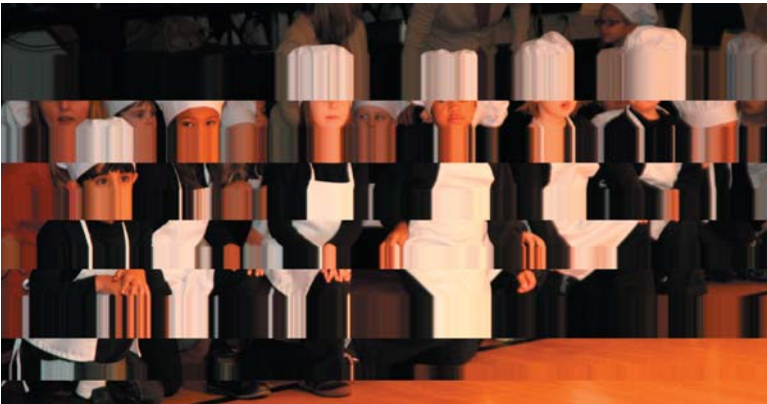




## Winter Festival 2012: *A Winterfest Carol*







## Winter Festival 2012

This year's show, entitled "A Winterfest Carol" was based loosely on Charles Dickens' "A Christmas Carol." Students from PreK-3 to grade 8 all performed amid the elaborate medieval sets and their roles included royalty, jesters, wizards and knights. This year's plot followed a selfish princess as she was visited by the Ghosts of Winterfest Past, Present and Future, who helped her to see the true meaning of giving at the Winterfest celebration.

Following an Unquowa tradition, alumni who were present joined students and faculty in a weaving circle to dance and sing "The Lord of the Dance." To end the show, the students sang "Oh Hanukkah" while dancing the hora, and then joined in acting out and singing "The Twelve Days of Christmas."

It was a wonderful show! Thank you to everyone for a job well done!



## Thinking Outside the Flower Box

Most of us associate spring with planting and fall with harvesting, but this year our young kindergarten scientists learned that growth is not that cut and dry. We planted bulbs at school in mid-November. The children were asked if they thought the bulbs were living or nonliving, which led to a discussion on dormancy. We are excited to see the first tulips pop up this spring along the school's front path!

In December, we visited Sport Hill Farm to continue our study of winter growth and to learn what



farmers do during these colder months. We found that there was still a lot to be harvested both inside and outside the greenhouses. Owner Patty Popp showed us the plastic they put over the beds to protect the plants from the early frosts and explained how our unexpected October snowstorm actually helped the crops because it acted like a blanket over the plastic and insulated them.

After our trip to the farm, we visited Chef Peter in the school's kitchen and made bread with swiss chard we brought from the farm. The children enjoyed rolling the dough and trying some of the delicious bread. Everybody knows eating is fun in all seasons.



*Faith Barbuto, Kindergarten Teacher*

## Caring for Canines!

In the spirit of giving during the holidays, the fifth grade remembered our furry friends! Our students are very passionate and interested in helping homeless



animals. With assistance from Chef David, Chef Peter and the generosity of Mrs. Proto, they mixed, shaped and baked dozens of gator and bone-shaped biscuits.

The treats were delivered to the Westport Humane Society where they were accepted with much gratitude and the wagging of tails.

This project was a great hands-on activity that allowed our students to show their concern for others and to demonstrate their love of animals.



*Holly Tortora, Fifth Grade Teacher*

## Second Grade Habitat Project

Before winter break, the second grade students studied habitats, environments and animal adaptations. As a culminating, cross-curricular project, the students worked with art teacher Mrs. Degranges and lower school technology teacher Mrs. Lietuvinikas to research an animal of their choosing. A sampling of some of the animals they researched includes armadillos, tokay geckos, red foxes and strawberry poison dart frogs.

Each student compiled their research into a written report, drew pictures of their animal and designed a model of the animal's environment. In the end they combined all the projects into one power point presentation and worked together as a class to present it to their parents.

Everyone enjoyed learning about these remarkable creatures.

*Stefanie Leavy, Second Grade Teacher*





## Winter Sports Update

Our basketball season is off and running and we are having one of our best starts ever. Our teams display a great work ethic, teamwork, a competitive edge, good sportsmanship and a passion for the game.

The Girls' White Team simply enjoys being around each other and learning how to play the game as a team. They are led by the tenacious defense of Erin and Jaeden while the offense is supplied by Olivia and Jessica.

The Boys' White Team is a veteran group with a strong desire to compete. Danny and Sisso run the offense, Justin rebounds and plays a gritty defense while

Patrick comes off the bench to supply a spark.

The Girls' Green Team is a cerebral bunch who always strive for perfection. Elizabeth and Olivia supply strong leadership while Kailey and Marissa lead the offense.

The Boys' Green Team is a basketball machine. They play beyond their years as they run the back door play, pick and roll and give and go. Alex plays the point while Jay and Jackson supply the offense.

Finally, I cannot put into words how exciting it is to walk into another school's gymnasium when we play an away game and see all of our fans there waiting to cheer us on. Your support has been a slam dunk!

***Coach Boccamazzo, Athletics Director***



**What percentage  
of our third through  
eighth graders play  
on an Unquowa  
basketball team  
this season?**

Answer on  
page 10

## Iron Chef Unquowa

The Unquowa kitchen was hopping in November with another fun and successful Iron Chef Unquowa competition. Six fearless teams of Upper School students put their skills and recipes against each other and the clock. A prerequisite for submission of recipes was that they must include at least one local ingredient, as well as the use of Chef Peter's secret ingredient, delicious peppers grown by our friends at Sport Hill Farm.

When the gong sounded to signal the starting of the clock, the kitchen erupted as the teams scrambled to gather all of their ingredients and necessary cooking

wares. Those who witnessed the competition were rewarded with the sights and aromas of

Sunday Sauce with Meatballs, Chicken and Vegetables, Maple Cumin Roasted Sweet Potatoes, Chicken Quesadillas with a Trio of Salsas, Corn Chowder, and Sesame Baked Chicken. At the end of the hour time limit, all the dishes were expertly prepared and plated to be reviewed by our young panel of judges — last year's winners, Paul and Michael, and Unquowa alums, Andres Ayala '10 and Tristan Schietinger '10. After careful deliberation, Victoria and Brienne's dish of Chicken and Vegetables emerged as the favorite dish. All the teams were inspirational in their collective dedication and hard work. As a reward and show of appreciation for their efforts, each team's recipe will make its way onto the school lunch menu for the enjoyment of all the students.



***David Brann, Resident Chef***

## From the UPA

The first half of our school year has been incredibly busy for the Unquowa Parents Association and we have no intention of slowing down! Recent months saw numerous UPA-sponsored activities from a successful Book Fair, well-attended Lower and Upper School socials, and an enjoyable night out for our parents at the Autumn Evening Wine Tasting. As always, the UPA is happy to underwrite some of the costs of WinterFest. To the many volunteers who helped create a magical evening, thank you! Running any successful event requires time, talent and dedication. The UPA is privileged to have so many dedicated parents. We recognize your efforts and want you to know how very much you are appreciated.

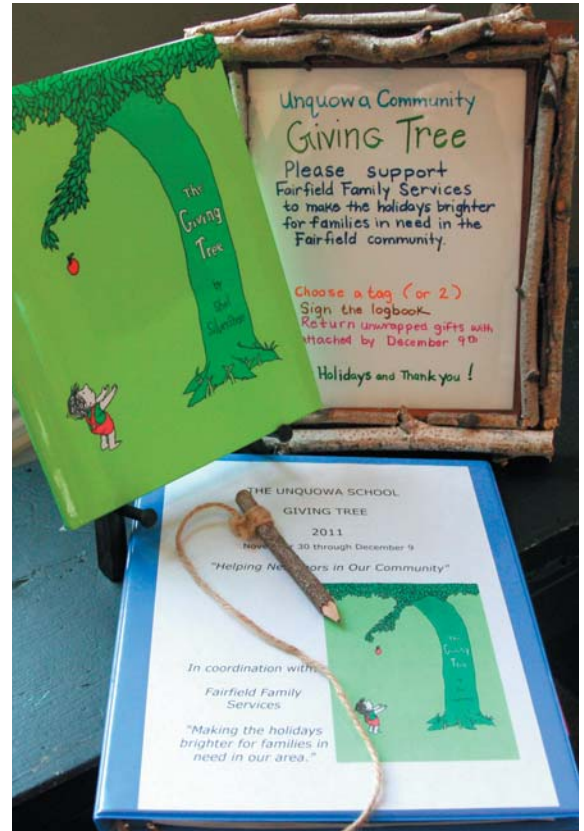
The UPA would like to acknowledge our Sunshine Committee who helped coordinate this year's holiday community service project. Together with the Student Representatives, we were able to directly impact the lives of 20 families within the Fairfield community by providing gifts to all the members of each family. We would like to thank Lisa Albenze, Stephanie Barnes, Mrs. Burton, Suzy Calzone and Joan Panagos for the beautiful giving tree display in the front hall and for providing an opportunity for our children to give back.

As we look forward to the upcoming year, we are excited about our annual spring fundraiser scheduled for March 10th. This event is the UPA's major fundraiser of the year and enables us to continue to support, underwrite and give to the school in many ways that directly affect our children. We encourage you to mark your calendars and plan on joining us for a fantastic evening of Moroccan-themed fun. Put on your dancing shoes!

The monies raised last year are still impacting our school in positive ways. If you have not recently been in the gymnasium, please stop by to see the latest gift from the UPA made possible with the funds raised last year. The large 14 by 14 foot motorized screen with an Epson projector is a daily reminder of the positive impact we can have. Bravo to last year's volunteers!

Our spring fundraiser is never possible without the help of many parents, and we are counting on everyone's support. There are numerous ways in which you can help the Auction Committee. If you have not yet volunteered, don't let this opportunity pass you by. Please contact Mindee Blanco (mblanco2@metlife.com) for more information.

*Kim Proto and Jenny Walsh, UPA Co-Presidents*



## Engagements and Babies



Congratulations to our Spanish teacher, Ms. Darr, on her recent engagement. She and her fiancé, Colin Shukie, are planning a July wedding.



Welcome to Ashley Ruth who was born on December 12 (right before Winter Festival!) to our music teacher, Mrs. Kirk, her husband Charles and big brother Ethan.



Kindergarten-er, Ahmed is loving his new baby brother Ali Babar who arrived on December 27.



Luke Harris arrived on November 23. Big brothers James in PreK-3 and his 6 year old brother, Charlie, were thrilled!



Born on December 26, Henry James was welcomed by kindergarten-er, Michaela, and the rest of the her family.

IQ Answer: 75%!



## Alumni News



**Andres Ayala '10** and **Tristan Schietinger '10** helped judge the latest Iron Chef Unquowa competition. Andres is a sophomore at Fairfield Prep and Tristan is a sophomore at Greens Farms Academy.

**Jeannine (Block) Lovering '90** lives in Mystic, Connecticut and is presently pursuing a career as a nurse after working as a research scientist for 13 years. She has 2 daughters, Amelia (6) and Bethany (4) and her husband James is a physics teacher at Waterford High School.

**Ruth Powell**, former Unquowa Lower School head and teacher, was honored by Easton's Republican Town Committee for her civic service. Her years of leadership on the Easton Board of Education, the Board of Ethics, the Easton PTA and the Public Health Board of Easton demonstrate Ruth's extraordinary commitment to her community. Congratulations!



**Diana Heise '93** has been awarded a Fulbright Fellowship in the Creative and Performing Arts. With this honor she will be living on the isle of Mauritius in the Indian Ocean for most of next year, making art-works that celebrate healing, peace-making and stories of resilience. Follow her blog at <http://dianaheise.tumblr.com>.

## 2nd Annual Winter Festival Alumni Reception

It was wonderful to have so many alumni come back for the alumni reception before the 31st Winter Festival! The library was buzzing as they reconnected with former classmates and teachers and poured over old yearbooks. Their special reserved seating section gave the alumni a great view of this year's show, "A Winterfest Carol". As always, during the traditional holiday songs at the end, many of the alumni enthusiastically joined in the singing and dancing.



*View the 2010-2011  
Annual Report  
on our website:  
[www.unquowa.org](http://www.unquowa.org)*

*Keep in touch!*

Please contact Kate Haviland  
[kate.haviland@unquowa.org](mailto:kate.haviland@unquowa.org)





## THE UNQUOWA SCHOOL

981 Stratfield Road, Fairfield, CT 06825-1697

*Cura Futuri Nobis ~  
The Future is in Our Care*

### Take-A-Look at Unquowa

Our Admissions Department hosts Take-A-Look Days for small groups of prospective parents to visit and learn more about Unquowa.

The tours provide the opportunity to see our classrooms and get a sense of our school's atmosphere. Ms. Lauer meets the group to answer any questions. Take-A-Look Days begin at 9:00 a.m. and last about an hour and a half.

**Thursday, February 9**

**Thursday, February 16**

**Thursday, February 23**

**Thursday, March 1**

**"I'd rather be on my farm than emperor of the world."**

*— George Washington*



**June 18 - July 13, 2012**

For children entering grades PreK-4 through grade 6.  
Registration forms will be available on our website on February 1.