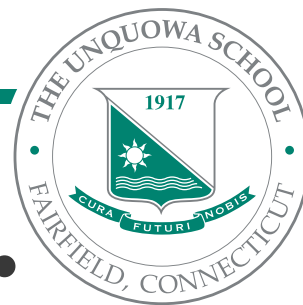


About U.S.



A Publishing Tradition
of The Unquowa School

A Message From the Head of School

The late writer John Updike observed that fiction is “like a room on whose walls a number of false doors have been painted. Within the narrative, we have many apparent choices of exit, but when the author leads us to one particular door, we know it is the right one because it opens.” Whether on the page or on the screen, a fictional narrative comes alive in new ways each time we read or see it based on who we are at the time.

A recent conversation with an Unquowa eighth grader reminded me of the truth of Updike’s observation. As I chatted with this particular student to prepare her for her high school interview, she talked with great insight about why she reread many of her favorite books, and I found myself echoing her experience. I remembered reading Balzac’s *Eugenie Grandet* for a second time as an adult and being surprised to stumble across a most entertaining group of older characters whom I did not remember from my first college reading. I was using the very copy I’d read as a student, so I was sure that the text had not been altered. No, it was merely Updike’s observation playing itself out; I was a different reader who’d been led to a new door.

Not only do we see a book or film differently each time we experience it because of who we are, but fictional characters can be so powerful that they can convince us to hope for better outcomes.

I remember observing this phenomenon on the opening night of Baz Luhrmann’s film version of *Romeo and Juliet*. My husband and I sat skeptically as the lone adults in a theatre filled with chatty adolescents. They were there mostly to see the youthful Claire Danes and Leo DiCaprio, but we were there as Luhrmann fans. We should have trusted the work. Within minutes of the film’s start, its power transported us all to Shakespeare’s world and every watcher

became silent as he or she was pulled into the world of rival families. In the well-known death scene, when Romeo predictably puts the vial of poison to his lips, a very sweet girl in the audience pleaded, “No, don’t do it.” Knowing the plot as we all do, she still hoped against hope that Juliet would stir and that both Juliet and Romeo would hear her own words from the audience and be saved.

Good fiction — both on the page and on the screen — does more than just speak to us differently each time we experience it. It also slows down our actual world by taking us deep into the

world of other complex beings. We might be pulled from the page of a book into the corner of a barnyard to balance on the fine silk of Charlotte’s web to observe the fidelity of her friendship with Wilbur. We might be whisked from the dark of a theatre seat into the seat of a courtroom where Atticus Finch offers us the chance to see a courageous but tender parent whose moral compass is true north. We can do so as a child, as an adolescent, or as an adult with our own child. Each time, however, we can be temporarily transported to a slower, quieter world and return to our own with new insight.

Years before he could predict the modern seduction of the internet, in an essay from his collection, *Hugging the Shore: Essays and Criticism*, Updike wrote, “I want to write books that

unlock the traffic jam in everybody’s head.” As this New Year begins, why not make one of your resolutions that of spending more time meeting and revisiting good books and good films, both alone and with your children. They will, in a magical way, slow down your own world and allow you and your children, by living the lives and circumstances of others, to see your own lives with a new perspective.



In her eighth grade speech, documentary film maker Maria talks about the impact of film.

Sharon Lauer, Head of School

Trimester I Honor Roll

Unquowa Honors

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

Grade 5

Carrie Smith

Akash Jyothish

Gianna Pinto

Siddharth Sunder

Grade 6

Lucille Panagos

Ava Vinton

Grade 8

Claire Abate

Conner Calzone

Madelaine Register

Alexandra Starovoitov

Grade 7

Rachel Albenze

Benjamin Chapin

Honors

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

Grade 5

Thomas Brennan

Ryan Cawley

Lisi Chapin

Remington Cheffer

Daniel DeGirolomo

William Geary

Aaron Gruen

Alexandra Halas

William Hansen

Adam Jehle

Ethan Klein

Naia Kocsi

Stephen Daniel Mezei

Sophia Mughal

Lola Panagos

Patrick Phelan

Grace Rosow

Maya Rubino

Drew Slager

Ella Stalowir

Karli Vare

Maxwell Victor

Miriana Wasserman

Charlotte Yin

Grade 7

James Blasius

Nora Brennan

Hannah Calzone

Mary Crooks

Alexandra Deutsch

Walter Erenhouse

Clara Horton

Olivia Hughes

Hailey Hughes

Zander Jehle

Quinn Mullineaux

Riley Pengue

Carson Solaz

Charlie Waghorne

Grade 8

Sara Adriani

Devin Blanchette

Elysse Cadoux

Derek Grabe

Elizabeth Halas

Kyra Inston

Maria Katsetos

Maeve Kelly

Delaney Murray

Olivia Seymour

Jackson Stalowir

Alexander Stein

Jared Sullivan

Daniel Wisdom

Grade 6

Paul Blanco

Chloe Coseglia

Julianna Darcy

Anne Marie Dooher

Sophia Fitzsimonds

Tess Haskel

Carolyn Kokias

Dylan McCormick

Ann McNeela

Ryan Moss

Sean Nicholas

Jessica Price

Progressive Education Lab



Progressive Education Lab (PEL) Fellows completed their experience at Unquowa and have moved on to The Calhoun School in New York City. PEL is a two-year fellowship (a training year followed by a year-long internship) designed to give young people who wish to become teachers an understanding

of the fundamentals of progressive theory while learning from their experiences at four different progressive schools. This year's fellows — Eileen Lai, Xu Li, Alice Lloyd and Kevin Smith — spent two months at Unquowa working with our faculty and students.



PEL Fellow, Eileen Lai, presented a lesson on patterns to PreK-4 students who had fun using beads and stamps to create an AABB pattern.

Kevin Smith commented, *"If there's one idea that I take away from my time at Unquowa, it would*

probably be the value of a healthy learning community to the success of a school...I know that we all learned and grew immensely in the few short months that we were here."

We wish the Fellows success as they explore the teaching profession through their internships next year.

Alice Desgranges, Art Teacher & PEL Coordinator



53% Qualified for the Johns Hopkins Center for Talented Youth Last Year

Fifty-three percent of last year's fourth through eighth grade students qualified for the Johns Hopkins Talent Search and were recognized at an assembly in December. These students were in the 95th percentile or above on the ERB standardized test. This accomplishment makes them eligible to take above grade level tests, such as the SATs, to assess their math and verbal/reading talents. In addition, they are given the opportunity to attend unique education programs throughout the U.S.

Mindfulness Takes Flight

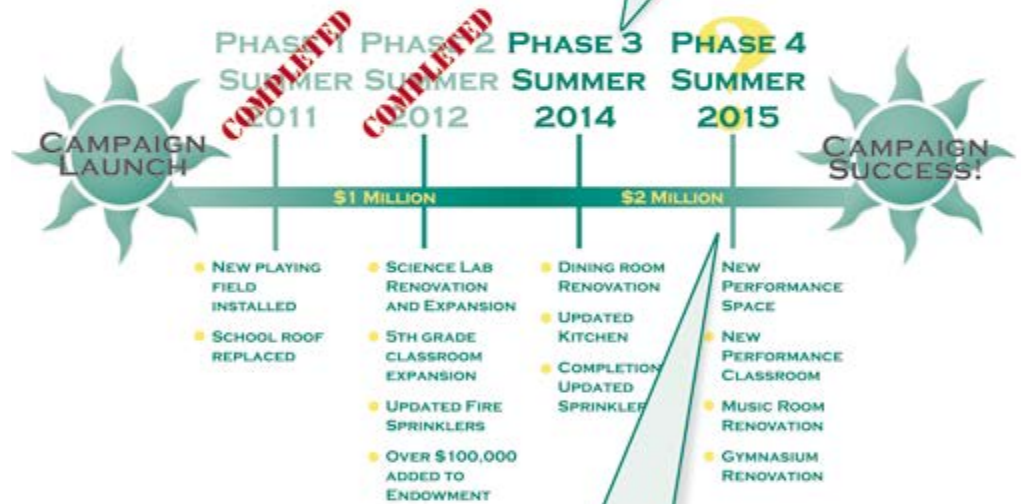
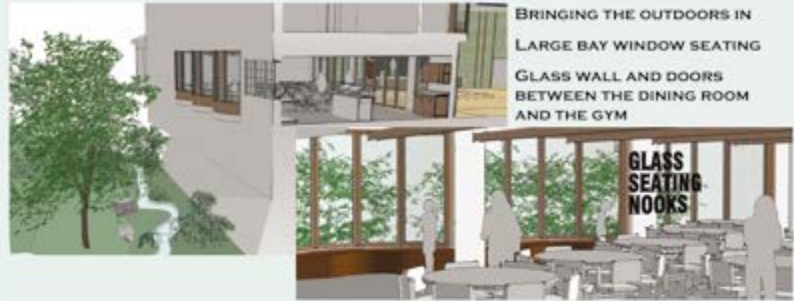
Since the beginning of the school year, it has not been unusual to hear chimes ringing as you walk through the building, to see children outside with their teacher taking a quiet “mindful walk” or sitting by the brook listening to the sounds of nature. In their classrooms you might see them sitting in a “peace corner” to just breathe for a moment! All of these examples are evidence of the Mindfulness Initiative launched at Unquowa this past fall and guided by the Inner Resilience Program, a social emotional curriculum developed by Linda Lantieri to enhance the academic lives of kids.

I recently asked teachers for an update of what has been happening in their classrooms and was not surprised by their excited responses. In the younger grades, students have gone on mindful journeys, visualizing a day at the beach or a walk through the forest and then reflecting on their journeys through drawing or journal writing. Mindful breathing at the beginning of the day or before tests and “gratitude circles” at the end of the day are also just a glimpse of some of the experiences the older students have had. Some students are commenting that breathing before a test helps them to focus and calm down and that now it doesn’t feel right to end the day without a gratitude circle. We are off to a wonderful start on this journey and are excited to continue down the path!

Mary Faulkner
Mindfulness Coordinator
for Upper School

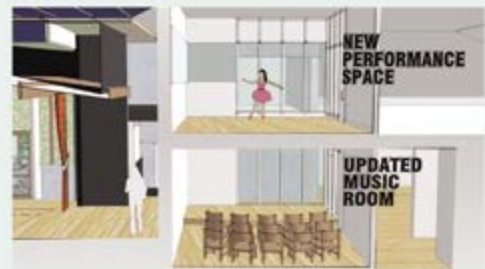
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Contact Kate Haviland in the Development Office
or go to www.unquowa.org/the-campaign



**How many before or after
school activities are available to
our students during the year?
Can you name them?**

Answer on page 10



Museum Collaboration

PreK-3 Studies Evergreens with Fairfield Audubon

An educator from the Audubon taught our PreK-3 students that evergreens do not shed their leaves like other trees. She introduced them to a couple of examples — the friendly fir and the prickly pine and brought evergreen branches to observe and study through touch and smell. As part of the study students created an art project to make kid-sized evergreen trees. They lay down on a big piece of white paper and had their bodies traced, then used brown pieces of paper to make the trunk and dipped pine branches in green paint to paint the treetops. The trees turned out well and it was a pretty messy project, which always adds lots of fun to a lesson.

Janice Shannon, PreK-3 Teacher



The Ogden House at Fairfield Museum & History Center

First graders stepped back in time as they explored the historic Fairfield Ogden House. They learned about the life of the Ogden family and all of the hard work the children were responsible for each day in the 1700s — activities like cooking and making clothing. They explored the kitchen, family room, the two bedrooms and the garret, where the Ogdens dried the herbs from their garden.

Maureen Becker, First Grade Teacher



Eighth Grade Leads Tours at The Aldrich Contemporary Art Museum

After four weeks of docent training, half of our eighth graders led tours of the museum for their peers in grades six through eight. Starting with an investigative line of questioning such as, "What do you see?" the docents elicited conversation that addressed the overall theme of the current exhibition, music. Installations as varied as Sol LeWitt's *The Music Collection* and Martin Creed's *Scales* offered a platform for discussion on how sound influences art and is incorporated into our everyday lives. It was a wonderful day and a great example of how Unquowa's partnership with The Aldrich Museum enriches the lives of our students. We are looking forward to the spring, when the rest of the eighth graders will complete their training to be docents and will lead tours for the fourth and fifth grades.

Krissy Ponden, Art Teacher



Second Grade Archaeological Dig in Sandbox Canyon



An extensive study of the Earth long ago brought second graders to dinosaurs, fossils and the scientists who study them. Using techniques and tools like those of the actual archaeologists they studied in class, this fearless group of second grade archaeologists scraped and brushed until bones lay exposed at Sandbox Canyon — conveniently located on our playground.

Using the red yarn grid on the site, the students carefully tracked their finds and identified each of the bones and fossils as they unearthed them. Great job, second graders!

*Cameron Ross-MacCormack
Second Grade Teacher*

Giving Thanks and Celebrating Thanksgiving



The whole school came together to celebrate Thanksgiving with a delicious feast cooked by Chef David and his team. In keeping with tradition, our eighth graders were our hosts and responsible for making the seating arrangement that gave every table a mix of Lower and Upper School students and then for setting the beautiful tables with the place cards that had been made by each student. The Lower School students arrived at the banquet dressed as Pilgrims and Native Americans while Upper School students were dressed up in their finest blazers and dresses. We were joined this year by the Halas family whose winning bid at last year's Spring Gala gave them family seats at the feast. Once everyone was seated, a group of students stepped forward and offered traditional blessings from around the world in a dozen different languages spoken by their parents and/or grandparents. Our eighth grade hosts played the role of servers, making sure that every table had as much turkey and sides as we could eat. The chefs outdid themselves with the feast this year!

After the feast, kindergarten and fourth grade students set to work on the exciting, yet daunting, task of filling a school bus with all the food generously donated by Unquowa families to the annual food drive for the Mercy Learning Center. Fourth graders also contributed several months' worth of their knitting projects (hats and scarves). After unloading the donations at the Mercy Learning Center, students went inside the center to learn more about how they educate mothers and help improve their lives and the lives of their children. It was a wonderful way to start the season of giving and gave everyone a moment to reflect on all we have to be thankful for.

Karen McClellan, Community Manager

A Cultural Exchange



Ana Cristina and José, our visiting students from Guatemala, arrived on Founders' Day. What could have been an overwhelming introduction, proved to be a very fun first look at their new school. They jumped in and helped with the activities organized by the eighth grade. Throughout their two month visit, Ana Cris and José enjoyed several cultural firsts: Halloween, Thanksgiving, playing in the snow and Winterfest preparations.

Looking back on their experiences, they are most thankful to their host families, teachers and the many friends they made here.

Ana Cris and José naturally lent authenticity to each Spanish class that they attended, often times serving as assistants. Their presence motivated students to learn and grow in their language studies. On a few occasions, Ana Cris and José led classes about their home life in Guatemala. In fifth grade they helped create a "barrilete" (kite).

These kites are typically prepared on a much larger scale for a Mayan Festival that coincides with All Saints' Day. They worked with seventh graders to create a traditional piece of art called an "alfombra" (rug) that is typically prepared during Holy Week in Guatemala. Students enjoyed working with them to create these special artifacts of Guatemalan culture.

We are all so grateful to have participated in this program and hope to continue with this bi-cultural exchange, so please keep your eyes peeled and your hearts open to the opportunity of hosting a Guatemalan student next fall.

Katie Brenna, Spanish Teacher

Once Upon a Time: The Untold Winterfest Stories

Our 33rd Winter Festival focused on the delicate balance between the modern-day reliance on gadgets and the ability to use our imaginations to interpret the world around us while upholding, of course, all the wonderful Unquowa Winter Festival traditions. Once upon a time, the Kingdom of Unquowa was in great turmoil. Many of its residents — who happened to be familiar characters from beloved stories — were in search of the endings of their tales due to an unknown twist of fate. Two young, technology-addicted children from the present day found themselves in the Kingdom with the mission of lending a helping hand as best they could - with no iPads or iPhones! Could they provide assistance without WiFi, GPS or a 4G network? Would the fairy tale endings be solved?

The script, which included all the time-honored traditions of our annual medieval celebration, was written by drama teacher Alyson Cahill who was joined in directing the production by choral teacher, Megan Kirk, and instrumental teacher, Senad Mehinovic. Thank you to all the faculty, staff and parents who helped make this year's show such a spectacular success. Special thanks to all of our students from PreK-4 to grade eight who did a spectacular job as our show's actors, singers, dancers, musicians and tech crew!





Preparing for Winter Festival



The transformation of the gym into a medieval castle began in December with stage decoration, lighting, bleachers and stained glass windows. In keeping with Unquowa custom, this year's kings and queen — Christopher, Carson and Gianna — were crowned at an assembly. Their first official duty was to preside over the first grade knighting ceremony. When second grader, Krystle, was announced as this year's partridge for our rendition of *Twelve Days of Christmas* at a later assembly, all traditional Winterfest roles were filled.



2013 Annual Fund *Every Year, Everyone, Any Amount!*

Did you know that Winterfest is just one of the many things the Annual Fund makes possible each year? In addition to helping create the magic of Winterfest, the 2013 Annual Fund is supporting our community-wide mindfulness initiative, our PEL teaching fellowship program, a new set of Chrome Book laptops and more.

The momentum of giving and participation in this year's Annual Fund continues to grow! Our thanks to the many current and former parents, alumni and grandparents who have already made their annual gift. If you haven't yet, there's still time...the 2013 Annual Fund runs until June 30, 2014!

Lisa and Fred Knopf, 2013 Annual Fund Co-Chairs

View the
2012
Annual Report
at
unquowa.org

Sixth Graders Baking Pizza in Science? Oh, They're Volcanoes



Sixth grade students made models of volcanoes to understand the differences between shield, cone and composite types. To construct the volcanoes, students made a very salty dough - much saltier than you would use for a pizza. The volcano models had to be accurate and complete, so students put lava streams only on shield and composite volcanoes.

Once the models were complete, they were blown up! The shield model was blown up with a slow, yellow, baking soda and vinegar combination, the cone with a bubbly froth made from hydrogen peroxide and yeast and the composite with a Mentos fountain.

Craig Knebel, Upper School Science Teacher

Fifth Grade Immersed in The Age of Exploration

Our fifth graders learned how faster ships, better maps and new navigational tools helped European explorers sail to the Americas in the 1500s. To introduce the concept, retired Naval Captain Abby Abbaspour visited as a guest speaker. He began by briefly reviewing the history of early navigational tools such as: astrolabe, sextant, gyro and compass. He later taught the fifth graders several navigational skills, connecting the lesson with his interesting real life experiences in the Navy.



A highlight of the visit was learning how to make a compass out of a needle, a leaf and water. Our guest speaker's lesson concluded with an activity in which students learned how to determine directions using their own body orientations. The Captain's workshop provided a nice introduction to the students' next project of making their own navigational tools, including astrolabes.

*Iman Rasti
Fifth Grade Teacher*



Winter Sports Update

Earl "The Pearl" Monroe always said, "players should play the game with a smile" and Unquowa basketball has taken that advice to heart. It has been such a pleasure to witness the joy and enthusiasm from all of our players, coaches and fans.

The Green Boys' and Girls' teams have begun their seasons with wins over St. Aloysius and Greenwich Country Day, while the White Boys' and Girls' teams have played barn burners against Fairfield Country Day and Convent of the Sacred Heart.

All of our teams have displayed great team play, sportsmanship and a commitment to our basketball program. They are having a ball!

Finally, thank you to all of our fans who find time in the day to cheer us on at every game.

Go Gators!

Coach Boccamazzo, Athletics Director



From the UPA

This fall, as always, was very busy for the Unquowa Parents Association. In November many parents and their friends enjoyed a fun evening at our Autumn Wine Tasting. Those attending the event sampled a wide variety of fine wines provided by Black Rock Wines and Spirits. Thank you very much to Steve Jones, David Dworski, Betsey Price, Katia Pierre-Louis, and Tanya Smith for all their hard work.

In December Unquowa once again adopted sixteen families through Fairfield Families in Need. Lisa Albenze, Leslie Geary and Ann Katis coordinated the "Gator Giving Pond" to display and fulfill the holiday wishes of these families. It was a wonderful way for Unquowa parents, students and faculty to have a positive impact on the local community.

As always, both performances of Winterfest were spectacular. From coordinating costumes and props to helping set up and break down the amazing post-performance feast, Unquowa parents were involved in many ways to help make the production a success. Thank you very much to Alison Bevan for coordinating and crafting the incredible costumes and to Carrie Perkins and Rebekah Wadadli for the wonderful decorations for the feast.

As we look towards the second half of the school year, save the date of **Saturday, May 3 for the UPA's Annual Gala and Auction.** Once again we will head "off to the races" in support of our children and our school. As part of our largest fundraiser of the year we will be honoring Sharon Lauer as she completes her 10th year as Head of School. The Fairfield Museum and History Center will be the venue for our Kentucky Derby-themed event. This wonderful event is never possible without the help of many dedicated parent volunteers. If you have an auction item to donate or you would like to volunteer to help, please contact Jill Pengue at jillpengue@gmail.com for more information.

Marianna Erenhouse, UPA President



Exploring Rocks & Minerals at Mother Earth Mine



Third grade students learned a number of interesting facts about the minerals they were shown before heading into the mine at Mother Earth. For example, did you know that "bloodstone" was used on the battlefield to treat injuries because of its ability to remain cold? Or that amethyst laid next to your bed is said to catch all of your bad dreams?

After a short video on the real-world hard work of mining for gemstones, students donned head lamps and headed into the mine. Although the mine was dimly lit, they managed to uncover many rocks and minerals.

Carlene Gordon, Third Grade Teacher



Welcome New Unquowans

Art Teacher and Unquowa alumna, **Krissy Ponden '95** and her husband, Tim, welcomed their first child, Claire Evelyn, in December —the day after Winter Festival!



Alyson Cahill, our Performing Arts - Drama Teacher, and her husband, David, welcomed their first child, Ella, in January.



Debbie Leidlein, History Teacher and High School Placement Coordinator, is a grandmother! Her daughter Emily gave birth to Lily Grace in January.



Elaine Tedros in grade 3 is happy to have a new sister. Gabriella, born in November, came to our Winter Festival!



Ariana Almodovar in PreK-4 is a spectacular big sister to her new brother Noah, who was born in November.



Corinne Hammond in PreK-3 has a new brother. Jack Thomas Hammond was born in January.



Alumni News

Art & Horticulture Reference Library Dedication

The dedication of the Muriel Read Leeds and **Ellen Leeds Sturges '53** Art and Horticulture reference section in The Unquowa School library took place in late November. When Ellen was an Unquowa student, her mother Muriel volunteered regularly as a gardening and art educator at the school.



Both mother and daughter were avid readers and collected books on a wide variety of related topics. Many of those beloved books now reside in the reference section of Unquowa's library. We are especially grateful to David Sturges, Ellen's long-time partner and life-long friend, for his thoughtful generosity in donating these books to Unquowa.



Congratulations

Lauren Gabriele '98 and Steve Diforio were married in 2013 in Saybrook, Connecticut. This photo includes many of the Unquowans who attending the wedding.



IQ Answer: 21

Basketball, Brownies, Cartooning Club, ChiFit, Cross Country, Field Hockey, Geography Club, Guitar Ensemble, Improv Comedy, Inventors Club, Junior Chorus, Karate, Lacrosse, Latin, Pen & Paper, Project FeederWatch, Ski Club, Soccer, Tech Crew, Yearbook and Yoga

Unquowa Reflections



Having spent all of her elementary school years at Unquowa before graduating, **Jackie Logan Blackburn '36**, has fond and vivid memories of her time at "the school by the brook."



She remembers spending the school day both in the classroom and outdoors doing interesting projects and activities: making relief maps out of flour on desktops and in dirt in the yard, woodworking with Mr. Cleveland, swimming lessons at the beach, balancing books on her head to learn good posture, playing store and working in the school's small woods. She easily recalls, and often still sees around town, her Unquowa friends and classmates.



After reading recent issues of the *About U.S.*, she remarked that she was pleased to see that the school has stayed on the progressive path of its founding years and maintained an emphasis on experience-based learning.

Math Scores Another Win

Alex Chasin '08 visited Unquowa in January. Mrs. Haseltine was delighted (and surprised!) by Alex's decision to major in math. She remembered that as an eighth grader, Alex felt that studying algebra was simply an imposition on his reading time. Alex explained that it wasn't until he studied calculus that he appreciated the beauty and power of mathematics. As a sophomore at Reed College in Portland, Oregon, he is now studying multi-variable calculus and linear algebra.



Alumni Events

First Annual Alumni Post-Thanksgiving Happy Hour

The day after Thanksgiving Unquowans gathered in force at a local restaurant to reconnect with former classmates and teachers. The first to arrive came wearing their old Unquowa gear and carrying yearbooks and Winterfest photos! The evening was filled with the happy sounds of friends seeing each other for the first time in years and it ended with a weaving line of alumni singing *The Lord of the Dance* and then raising the candles on the tables to do the traditional candle dance from Winterfest.

This amazing event was the brainchild of three dedicated alums - **Lauren Gabriele '98**, **Brad Topar '99** and **Eric Haseltine '99**. It was such a success that everyone asked for it to become a new tradition. Mark your calendars for November 28, 2014!



Alumni Reception at Winterfest 2013

The magic of Winterfest draws alumni back to Unquowa every year! This year was no exception. Many of them gathered in the library before the show to catch up with each other and their Unquowa teachers. At showtime they joined the audience to watch this year's show. Although seating is tight every year, they stood on the sidelines or squeezed in where they could, eager to see the tale unfold and to remember when they were knights, wizards, "ladies dancing," "lords a leaping" and more. Watching them join in the traditional dances at the end was, as always, a moment that showed the depth of their connection to Unquowa and to each other.





THE UNQUOWA SCHOOL

981 Stratfield Road, Fairfield, CT 06825-1697

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

Creating Connections Through Art



This past fall, seventh grade students drew pictures illustrating an aspect of our culture they feel is important to them. These illustrations were then sent to Creative Connections, an international cultural exchange organization, where they were judged by a panel. Seventh grade students Mary Crooks and Rachel Albenze were selected by the panel to have their art displayed in the International Children's Art Exhibition in May in Norwalk, Connecticut.

After judging, the pictures were sent to one of two schools selected as Unquowa's partners in Chennai, India and Amman, Jordan. In January, we received pictures drawn by students from these schools and are studying them to learn more about their cultures. In February and March our seventh graders will video chat with students in these partner schools to discuss similarities and differences in their lives— an outstanding way to connect on a personal level while gaining a better understanding of other cultures.

Debbie Leidlein, Upper School History Teacher

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 13

Thursday, February 20

Thursday, March 6