



The Stanwich Heart

The Monthly Newsletter of The Stanwich School

December 2011

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From the Headmistress

Traditions

As we look toward the coming days, we welcome the traditions of our holiday concerts, art shows and programs. At Stanwich, we have also established traditions of giving and various grade levels look forward to the opportunities to make a difference to others through gifts of food, toys, books and clothing. This is also a season of memories and for each of us, a time to reflect and appreciate the gift of community.



Pat Young with alumna Claudia Consuegra at the Turkey Bowl

In recent discussions with the Primary and Intermediate House students, we examined the meaning and value of traditions. Traditions give us a sense of stability, something we know will happen at a given time of year in a particular way. Traditions also help us identify our uniqueness, what differentiates us as a school, and traditions also develop continuity between generations of students, something we at Stanwich will acquire in time. We talked about the many traditions we appreciate at Stanwich School and what makes them important.

Among the treasured events, the Stanwich School Book Fair and our Alumni Turkey Bowl, brought our community together recently for shared memories and connection. A special thank you to each of you for your work and participation in our book fairs and for encouraging our community spirit. Our faculty and alums also had a wonderful afternoon at the Turkey Bowl; a heated game of flag football, specialty hot dogs, and time with former teachers and classmates.

Sharing together, and learning more about one another's customs are opportunities we embrace. A special food, custom or dress not only defines our personal uniqueness but also enriches others. As parents visit our classrooms to share holiday traditions, as students come together to share their favorite holiday traditions, we recognize the real brightness of the season.

Our Stanwich parents established a tradition of faculty gift giving that has been honored and appreciated through the past thirteen years. Faculty and staff are recognized through the Parent Association during the December holidays, as well as at the end of the year, with generous gifts you have given in your annual Parent Association dues. We are grateful for these gifts that allow each student to be a part of a greater whole and be included in this manner of saying, "Thank you." This is a unique tradition at Stanwich that is inclusive and special.

Should you have time for a thought provoking read during the holidays, I suggest *That Used to Be Us*, by Thomas Friedman and Michael Mandelbaum, a commentary on where we are as a nation today, and how we might return to greatness. I saw some parallels with our own growth and am reminded of the importance of the values we aspire to at Stanwich.

We wish you safe, healthy and blessed holidays, and look forward to seeing you at the many events that welcome the season and share the gifts of your children.

Fondly,

The Stanwich School's Holiday Performances

Upper School Concert and Art Show Thursday, December 8 at 8:30am

Presented by the Upper School Band, Orchestra,
Choir & Bells Ensemble
Stanwich East

Pre-K Holiday Program Friday, December 9 at 10:15am

Presented by the students of the Pre-K Cottage
Greenwich Baptist Church - Chapel

Intermediate House Concert Wednesday, December 21 at 5:30pm

Presented by the Intermediate House Band,
Intermediate House Choir & String Orchestra
Central Middle School Auditorium

Primary House Holiday Program Thursday, December 22 at 11:00am

The Hanukkah Story & The Christmas Pageant
Greenwich Reform Synagogue Sanctuary

Let the Light Shine

In the next few weeks, we will be cutting the ribbon upon the first physical space we can call our own; an athletic surface at the school's entrance. Affectionately, I will call it our 'field of dreams' and invite you to do the same. The field will proudly display our emblem as a shining beacon – the Triskelion – and serve as a pitch for those athletes whose dream it is to play like the stars. My wish for each of our student athletes is to strive to be the best they can be. In this competitive world, sport is that endeavor by which hard work, team play, humility in victory and resiliency in defeat strengthen life-long skills.

The field is a first step in realizing the Stanwich dream, and it serves as a prudent reminder of what our school is really building. It is, after all, simply an exposed flat surface given purpose and meaning by the preparations for play and engagements executed upon it. The dream Stanwich is building lies within the spaces between the players and those coaches who instruct and inspire and teach those life-long skills mentioned above. Many places have exquisite fields, some awe-inspiring stadiums and rich traditions of power and prowess. But as recent horrors in the collegiate sports world have come to light, both dreams and the nightmares rest among the people called to serve. It is the light that celebrates the dreams and confronts the dark recesses of those nightmares. Let the light shine that the truth may be revealed.

Living Out The Mission

Stanwich is building through its people, living out the mission that keeps personal excellence, compassion for others, along with moral courage and leadership at the forefront. We will keep building a more permanent space for

all our grades, and with the requisite funds will complete those spaces over time to realize the dream. However, we will continue to shine the light on the people of Stanwich, the extraordinary professionals called to service centered on the Stanwich mission, to build substantial and moral lives. We desperately need Stanwich graduates in this world now more than ever.

Light That Illumines

Finally a quick note about this holiday season. Amidst the hubbub of holiday ribbons, I hope we always remember the reasons for our faith tradition celebrations. Their focus is the same light that celebrates dreams and confronts nightmares – the return of the sunlight hours that have steadily shortened throughout the fall, the miraculous light of the oils that burned for eight days, the birth of a savior child who represents the light of the world, and most recently the celebrations of light from family, community, and culture. It is light that illumines, and warms, and guides, and helps us grow as it nourishes. Often, it literally means the difference between life and death.



We will continue to shine the light on the people of Stanwich, the extraordinary professionals called to service centered on the Stanwich mission, to build substantial and moral lives.

Remember that each of us is called to serve as a light to our youth: we illumine, and guide, and enlighten, and help our little ones grow in nourishing ways. Thank you for making their futures a bit brighter, and thank you for sharing that shine at Stanwich.

Here's hoping your holidays, your Christmas, your Hanukkah, your Kwanzaa, or any other tradition you celebrate, is joyous and filled with light. May your light bring peace and comfort to others. \$

Pre-K Cottage



Pre-K Cottage Team
Mrs. Oh, Mrs. Kennedy,
Mrs Acker, Mrs. Otsuka

Getting Ready For Winter

Winter is a time to wonder why the leaves go away,
And to ask ourselves why the squirrels get fat.
(Not to mention it is time to wear gloves and a hat).

At the Pre-K the coming of winter means:

Showing compassion ...
by helping teachers and classmates
by giving mittens and hats to those who have less
by making a gift for someone special

Learning ...
that teamwork makes bigger castles
that doing our best feels good
that "school is like one big playdate"

Excitement ...
for sitting down to a Thanksgiving feast
for the snowy days to come
for sharing holiday songs

Giving Thanks

Pre-K students celebrated Thanksgiving with a feast after studying the Iroquois tribe. The children are wearing gestowahs (headdresses) and wampum belts.



Top Chefs

In preparation for their Thanksgiving feast, Pre-K students made pumpkin muffins, and shook cream to make butter.



Building Teamwork

Students used teamwork to create a "tower" in the playroom.

Primary House

Keep us Smiling



Julie Colligan
Head of Primary House

During the months of November and December we focus on compassion – understanding the pain of other and acting to end their distress. We explain to the children that the action piece of compassion really makes the difference – the doing. We opened the month with our Candy Wrap community service project for Kids in Crisis where the children filled bags with candy and created cheerful notes and drawings to place inside the bags of candy. The children who stay at the Kids in Crisis shelters receive the bags on their pillows as a token of welcome or a pick-me-up. I am told that the messages and the drawings are truly treasured by the children who receive them. At assembly I shared a thank you note with the children from Kids in Crisis to let them know how powerful their action was. Our children made an important difference in the lives of other children by making those candy bags and notes. The thank you note closed, “The packages of treats and beautiful pictures and notes you put inside will keep us smiling for many, many months!” Your children are sharing their compassionate hearts with others every day, and in doing so they are making the world a better place.

“We Are Thankful”

The PH students gave a wonderful performance of the Puritans’ life in England, the Pilgrims’ trip on the Mayflower, and their experience with the Native Americans.



Intermediate House



Meaghan Mallin
Head of
Intermediate House

Collaboration & Creativity

Though November offered up many moments of true Stanwich spirit, none captured our hearts quite like the Grade 4 Revolutionary War play. It was, in a word, delightful! Our fourth graders made us incredibly proud with their singing, performance skills, and comedic timing. Our grade level plays are the culmination of a tremendous amount of hard work and commitment on the part of our students, and their teacher, Robyn Babina.

Collaboration, compromise, and creativity all play into the preparation for the big performance. Students take part in script writing, choreography, props, and set design. All of this results in them taking true ownership of the production. Beyond this, each grade level play ties into the students' history curriculum, resulting in a deeper understanding of what they are learning about in the classroom.

Our fourth graders will undoubtedly never forget the details of the American Revolution that were captured in the songs they performed in their play. Above all, their performance was the embodiment of the Stanwich spirit, as their joy truly resonated from the stage and spread to every member of the audience. Well done, Grade 4!

Hands-on History

As part of their history curriculum on ancient Egypt, Grade 5 students learned how the Egyptians used a shaduf — a hand operated lever — to transfer water from the Nile River or the canals into the fields, keeping them irrigated during the growing season (known as Peret). Then the students looked at different designs and created their own authentic, working, shadufs.



Fanciful Faces

Grade 6 students created their own soap carvings inspired by the study of African masks. Each student created his or her own mask using additive and subtractive carving techniques, and then added paint and additional embellishments.



The American Revolution

As part of their Social Studies curriculum, Grade 4 students performed, *The American Revolution: 1763 - 1789*. Students learned about the Declaration of Independence, the Electoral College, and the Founding Fathers.



Junior House



Jerome Murphy
Head of Junior House

Indelible Effects

As we approached the Thanksgiving holiday, we asked our students to pause and reflect on that which they were thankful for, I couldn't help but do the same. Like many, I am thankful for the caring relationships which surround me and help provide substantive meaning in my life. Following the recent 3rd Annual Turkey Bowl – an event which brings all Stanwich alumni together – I realize that I am thankful for the relationship I have with Stanwich and all the students, past and present, who bring life to this institution.

After seeing and catching up with so many former Stanwich students, I realize how important these people are in my life. Our alumni who help shape and give meaning to my existence at Stanwich. When I interact with our former students, it occurs to me how much of an effect Stanwich had on who these students are presently. No longer the shy, disorganized, and socially awkward young boys and girls, I see grown-ups, (well, almost) who present themselves confidently and who are all looking at or experiencing the college landscape ahead of them with purpose and determination.

I see young men and women, who, building upon a foundation set for them at Stanwich, are ready to carve out their niche and make a difference in life. I see our alumni and the joyful manner in which they describe the challenges they have overcome and the successes they have achieved. When I see the role our school has played in their development, I can't help but feel immense pride in working at Stanwich.

The Turkey Bowl serves to remind me of all that is good at Stanwich. To witness the maturity with which these adolescents present themselves reinforces for me the power of this school's mission and the indelible effects it has had on the growth and development of all of the children we have served over the years.

Live From Stanwich East!

Much to the delight of Intermediate House students and faculty, the Junior House students have produced two editions of the new Stanwich newscast, *Live From Stanwich East*. The production includes news stories, interviews and tours of the Upper School campus, and has been broadcast during morning assembly at the IH.



Trout Studies

As part of the Grade 7 Life Sciences curriculum, students traveled to Cold Spring Harbor Fish Hatchery and the Dolan DNA Learning Center, both on Long Island, where they participated in two hands-on labs inside a fully functional genetics research laboratory.

Senior House



Derek Krein
Head of Senior House

iGeneration

In the Senior House our students continue their individual and collective journeys along the electronic interstate, stopping along the way to engage in new opportunities and to assimilate those experiences into a more complete understanding of themselves and the world around them. These stops are indicative of how dramatically the world has changed since we went to high school. The education they need as preparation for the world they will inherit, is far different than the education we received in advance of the world we live in. Take two examples coming out of the SH elective curricula: the Stanwich School student generated online newspaper, *THE SET*, and the opportunity for e-trading. Neither of these are, in and of itself, a novel idea. But, each experience itself for an individual student is novel, relevant, and meaningful.

Writing, editing, and producing an article, whether it's a reporting piece or an op-ed piece for the community or world (wide web, even) to read and respond to is a daunting proposition for a ninth or tenth grader – never mind an entire publication. But within the iGeneration, who knows what other transformations or epiphanies this e-experience sparks. Today, they are communicating information about Stanwich School; tomorrow ...? Ah, to find one's e-voice.

Letting students engage in the immediate learning process of trading stocks taps critical "just in time" knowledge and skills – critical thinking, problem solving, creativity, global-mindedness to name just a few. It also gives students a chance to understand a bit about life "in the real world" which is what we're educating them for in the first place, right? Trading decisions have outcomes and consequences: achievement with a small "a" as well as failure with a small "f." These letter grades and these real world "classroom" experiences will come to define schools of the future.

Going Digital

The Grade 10 Media Elective, in cooperation with the Newspaper Club at the Upper School, has published the inaugural issue of the new digital school newspaper: *The Stanwich East Times*, or *The SET*.

The mission of *The SET*, which is run completely by students, is to inform the communities of both campuses about news and developments at our Upper School, provide stories of interest from local or national stories, and provide a forum for student opinion and an exhibition of student creative writing.

The newspaper is run by an Editorial Board of Grade 10 students who are studying Journalism, Media, and Film as their elective. These students write, edit, sequence, and post all of the content. Stories, profiles, and other contributions are also made by "freelance" JH students who are members of the Newspaper Club.

The newspaper will be updated frequently with new stories, graphics, and other content. Viewers can check the weather at the site, link to Stanwich sports reports, and are encouraged to participate in the interactive surveys, submit school photos, and contribute ideas. A link can be found at Today@Stanwich.

All Upper School students are welcome to write for *The SET*. You can send articles, stories, poems, scanned art work, photography, or other ideas to the publication's official email address at theset@stanwichschool.org.

The SET is based in Room 407 at the Upper School. We look forward to bringing you major Stanwich stories! Welcome to *The SET*!



Upper School Fall Season Wrap-Up



Chris Cardarelli
Director of Athletics

The Stanwich School sports program had a fine fall season. Once again, Stanwich athletes showed their skills and demonstrated sportsmanship on the field. It was also a season of firsts for the Stanwich School, as we had our first Junior Varsity games in both girls' and boys' soccer. Stanwich also hosted its first Cross Country event at Bruce Park.

Leading the way this fall was the Cross Country program as they had two runners place in the top five of their divisions. Arden Orwicz claimed third place in the 7th Grade Girls' division in the season-long Cross Country standings. However, Arden rose to the occasion in the championship meet as she took home first place! Emily Moran came in fourth place in the 7th Grade Girls' division in the season long standings. Emily also raised her game in the championship meet when she came in second place in the race.

As I mentioned previously, Stanwich placed its first Junior Varsity teams this fall. The boys' JV Soccer team started off slowly by dropping their first three games, but, as in true Stanwich fashion, came on strong in the end. The JV boys finished the season with convincing wins over King and Brunswick.

The Junior Varsity girls played hard all season and showed tremendous spirit. They did not manage to win any games, but they did Stanwich proud in their work on and off the field.

The 7/8 boys' Soccer team finished the season with 2 wins, 2 losses and 1 tie. They showed their heart and desire in the first game of the season as they fell quickly behind 4-1. However, they never gave up and scored the final 3 goals of the game to tie Resurrection 4-4. The 7/8 boys played their best game of the season in a 4-0 victory over Greenwich Country Day.

The 7/8 girls' Soccer team improved tremendously as the season progressed. Their hard work didn't land any victories for the girls, but they played hard every game, supported their teammates and never gave up. In the last game of the season, the 7/8 girls gave Greens Farms everything that they could handle, but just could not find the back of the goal in a 2-0 loss.

The Football team battled hard every game and showed the true meaning of playing to the last second of the game. In an unbelievably amazing season, almost every football game came down to the last play. In one of those games, Stanwich came out on top in a 14-6 victory over Greenwich Country Day.

The sailing program continued to enjoy life on the Long Island Sound. The sailors enjoyed the nice weather this fall and had a blast racing from buoy to buoy during races amongst themselves.



Parent Association

Dear Stanwich Community,



The Parent Association has had a busy November. We had our first open PA meeting of the year and we presented our speakers from Women of Vision, Andrea Hickman and Susan Garafoli, a check in the amount of \$3400 which represented the fundraising efforts of our Intermediate House students during the month of October. Our next open PA meeting will be February 1; we will send reminders as the date approaches and we hope you can join us.

Our Book Fair was a great success with lots of wonderful selections for every age. The Upper School Book Fair in the Library was again a big hit and the student wish lists were great for holiday gifts. Family Day was a lot of fun with the addition of Garden Catering to complement the ice cream from our 4th Grade students. We saw a big increase this year in Library donations, as more than 230 books were donated to the PH/IH and Upper School Libraries. I want to extend a BIG thank you to Beth Daigle, the Book Fair Chair, her committee and all the parent volunteers that helped to make this another wonderful event.

December will continue to be busy. Community Service has lots going on as we prepare for the holidays. We have fascinating Arts and Enrichment assemblies planned for every House. These activities, combined with our wonderful concerts performed by our children, will ensure we are all in the holiday spirit.

I wish all of you a safe and happy holiday season. Have a fun and restful break with your family and friends. See you in 2012!

—Wynn McDaniel, Parent Association President, 2011-2012

Announcements from the PA

WOMEN OF VISION

Our fundraising efforts from our Intermediate House students raised \$3400 to sponsor students and families through Women of Vision. Our thanks to Melissa Raezer, our Community Service Chair and Jeannene McMurchy, our IH Community Service Rep, for making this project such a success for The Stanwich School.



Susan Garafoli, Wynn McDaniel, Elizabeth Boolbol and Andrea Hickman

Still need a Mini Directory? While we sold many at the Book Fair, they are still available through the Spirit Store in limited quantities for \$10.



Need Holiday Gifts? Here Are 2 Great Suggestions!

1 Shop your Spirit Store! We have beach towels for that sunny trip south or warm knit hats and flannel pants if you are going on a ski trip. Details are on the Spirit Store website or you can contact Tiffany Benincasa, tiffany.benincasa@gmail.com or Stefani Nedzamar, nedzamar@yahoo.com.



2 Don't forget our "Cuvée le Triskelion," a limited production of Merlot and Cabernet, available exclusively at Le Wine Shop, 39 East Elm St., Greenwich, proprietor, our Stanwich Family, Etienne and Veronica Touzot

Save the Date! Happy 14th Birthday Stanwich

Charter Day Parent Celebration
Saturday, January 28, 2012

6:30 - 8:30pm

First Presbyterian Church, Greenwich



Charter Day is the anniversary of the founding of Stanwich School. Every year students and faculty commemorate the "birthday" of the school with reflection, celebration and acts of generosity toward others. This year, Stanwich turns **fourteen!** During the day, special events will be held for the student body and on Saturday night, a parent cocktail party will round out the celebration. As always, the success of an event is dependent upon its volunteers.

Please email Maryann Heaven to sign up!
maryann@heaveningreenwich.com

KUDOS FOR A GREAT STANWICH BOOK FAIR!

Book Fair Committee: Beth Daigle, Cindy Hadstadt, Kirsten Pitts, Elina Daetwiler, Kim Brush, Wendy Cutter, Carol Ann McClean, Susie Copley, Kathy Corsi and all the parent volunteers!

Logo Winners: We'd like to recognize our Logo winners for designing our theme, "Stanwich is Building Readers" 8th Graders Lucy Burnett and Peter Ferrarese!



COMMUNITY SERVICE HIGHLIGHTS

PRE-K & LOWER SCHOOL Our students will be busy in a variety of Community Service projects, from the "Hat and Mitten Tree" in Pre-K to the Primary House "Gift is in the Giving" collection to benefit Kids in Crisis, to the Intermediate House where they are making felt garlands for Nathaniel Witherell holiday trees and decorating lunch bags for Meals on Wheels.

UPPER SCHOOL In the Junior House, Grade 7 began their introduction to different organizations and causes: St. Luke's, Kids in Crisis, New Canaan Nature Center. Grade 8 began their commitment to the following organizations: Pets for Patriots, Stamford Food Bank and care for senior citizens, and Grade 9 stayed at a homeless shelter in New York City which helped to facilitate the students' awareness and reflection in the issue of homelessness in our society.

In the Senior House, students are actively supporting the Breast Cancer Alliance Junior Committee. Stanwich was represented at a site visit to St. Raphael's Hospital in New Haven, CT. Several of our Grade 9 and 10 students attended a presentation given by a cancer survivor. Among other things, they learned that laughter, purpose, dreams and courage should be priorities in your life.



Intermediate House students making felt garlands

ARTS & ENRICHMENT HIGHLIGHTS

Primary House was abuzz on Veterans Day. Girl and Boy scouts dressed in full uniform, and we enjoyed guest appearances at the special Veterans Day assembly from two decorated officers who came to speak of their unique experiences as servicemen. Ask your children what the army fatigues smelled like! We are very grateful to Tiffany and Jamie Benincasa for arranging the speakers and for giving Veterans Day such a special meaning. Looking ahead to December, Junior House will have their first Special Assembly with *The World of Anne Frank* and *Marvelous Mutts* will entertain and teach us about animal rescue at the IH and PH.



U.S. Marine Cpl. Joe Darula



Molly Cutter - Grade 4



GOING GREEN!

HOW I HELP THE ENVIRONMENT

This Month's Student Green Winner: Molly Cutter

I help the environment in numerous ways. To start with, last year in third grade I went to Mrs. Brush's Green Cougars afters class. We made things to save trees and power. First, we made paper out of scrap paper. We ripped scrap paper and put it in a blender. We had to dry the paper out, and we used cookie cutters and made shapes. We had colored, shaped, dry paper. Another thing we did was make note pads out of scrap paper, a pipe cleaner, and cardboard. We hole-punched the cardboard and tied the paper together with the pipe cleaner. We also made napkins out of cloth. Mrs. Brush brought her sewing machine as well as cloth. We sewed two pieces of cloth together and then we took a leaf and we painted the leaf over the napkin, and then we had a napkin with a leaf on it. In afters, we did several things to help the environment. You should try these things one day so you can make God's world a better place.



NEASC Accreditation

The Self-Study process continues on many fronts. The parent body was surveyed before the Thanksgiving break. Thank you to the more than 180 families who responded to the survey; results are now being collated and reviewed. The faculty will be surveyed in early December. Students will be surveyed as well. Meanwhile, Committees have been formed to evaluate every aspect of the program according to a set of Standards and Indicators established by NEASC. Called "Standards Committees," these groups will meet regularly between January and March to consider in detail the following:

- Mission
- Governance
- Enrollment
- Program
- Experience of the Students
- Resources to Support the Program
- Early Childhood Program (Pre-K Cottage)
- Faculty
- Administration
- Evaluation and Assessment
- Health and Safety
- Communication
- Infrastructure
- The Accreditation Process

Each Standards Committee will produce a written report documenting compliance with the NEASC Standards and Indicators and making recommendations that will enhance student experiences and foster school improvement. All of these efforts are supervised and coordinated by the NEASC Steering Committee, chaired by Paul Geise. The Steering Committee is also discussing revisions to the Statement of Vision which was originally drafted when the school was created. If you have any questions, please contact Paul at pgeise@stanwichschool.org.

3rd Annual Alumni Turkey Bowl

Stanwich's third annual Turkey Bowl was a huge success with over 100 alumni, parents and faculty gathering at Stanwich East.



With Deepest Gratitude

At this year's wonderful Book Fairs (at both the main campus and Stanwich East), families once again demonstrated their extraordinary generosity by donating more than \$4,500 to the Stanwich library. We are overwhelmed and delighted by this outpouring of support. All of the monies raised will be used to purchase additional resources for the library, including both print and electronic materials. The quality and depth of our collection, which

now exceeds 12,000 volumes, is directly due to the support of Stanwich families. Special thanks to Beth Daigle, Cindy Hatstadt, and Elina Daetwiler whose tireless efforts and good humor were inspiring. We are truly grateful.

— Liz Oestreich and Anna Waters

