



The Stanwich Heart

The Monthly Newsletter of The Stanwich School

January 2012

Inside This Issue

**Pre-K Students
Celebrate the Holidays**

Pg.4



**Wax Museum Brings
Civil War to Life** *Pg.6*



**Upper School Concert
Is a Ringing Success** *Pg.7*



+ PLUS so much more!

The Joy of the Season

To tell the Hanukkah and Christmas stories, PH students dressed as Judeans and a menagerie of animals, sang in four languages. *Pg.5*

From the Headmistress

Community Commitment

Returning in January after a restful holiday is always a time of reflection and anticipation. At Stanwich we look forward to our traditions of our month of reading celebration, our Math-a-Thon for research at St. Jude's, and our 14th year birthday! Each event holds memories we treasure and involves a total community commitment.

Among the highlights of the reading celebration are our guest readers including authors, faculty and parents. The Primary House children delight in the faculty play which highlights their favorite books. Throughout all our houses, favorite reads are shared by students and faculty during morning assemblies. All are encouraged to set aside time for reading during this month that engages family discussion about books.

Our support of St. Jude Children's Research Hospital has also been an important focus for us in January. Over the past several years we have established a wonderful relationship with this organization and have been honored by visits from some of the St. Jude's families who shared their stories of healing and support. Doing math problems became easy when we realized the difference we could make

to so many children. Our success has not gone unnoticed and we have been recognized by St. Jude's. The playground at Stanwich Road and our new bleachers and athletic equipment at Stanwich East are gifts given to us by St. Jude's sponsors for making outstanding contributions. You will be hearing about this year's Math-a-Thon in the coming days.

Charter Day brings many traditions as we celebrate the 14th birthday of our school. We celebrate this important event during the last weekend in January – our official birthday is January 27th this year – which will also be our in-school celebration time. The Primary House delights in wearing special homemade birthday hats adorned with Stanwich symbols, the Intermediate House gets creative with decorated footwear, and we all gather for an all-school assembly highlighting special accomplishments of the year. Included in this assembly is the special recognition of the Board of Trustees Humanitarian Grant which is given by the Board to a faculty member to make God's world a better place. This grant has allowed our faculty to travel to Ghana, Rwanda, and Peru, and has opened up opportunities for our students to learn, connect and share first-hand. This day also includes gatherings where our older students work together with our younger children which culminates, of course, with birthday cupcakes.

Stanwich parents also celebrate our "birthday" each year with an evening get-together. Please plan to join us for this toast to Stanwich on Saturday, January 28 from 6:30 to 8:30pm at the First Presbyterian Church's social hall in Greenwich. We are so grateful for the many ways you, our parents, have helped us grow and build a community that allows our children to flourish. Come sing "Happy Birthday!"

May 2012 hold for each of us, and for our school, continued blessings of God's joy and peace.

Fondly,



Pat Young with Pre-K students along with the hat and mitten collection for Head Start

Looking Forward to Great Things

Happy New Year. In the bleak mid-winter — or with promises that winter will arrive! — it seems fitting to look forward with optimism and anticipate great things. There are two exciting and special events taking place in London in 2012 in which young adults will seek to be their personal best: the world's top amateur athletes will convene for the summer Olympic games and our Grade 10 "Olympians" will be heading to this world city in March as part of their sophomore year academic studies. No doubt the latter will receive better local coverage, but both likely will generate many lasting memories.

Stanwich's inaugural international studies program is simply one additional element in the ongoing growth of our fine school. Our students will learn on location; completing a *Henry IV* workshop with Shakespearean actors at the Globe Theater, teaching lessons digitally from the British Museum, working through the Modern European History curriculum with the Imperial War Museum and Cabinet War Rooms, experiencing a special Charles Dickens exhibit at the Museum of London, touring a world renowned English football stadium, participating in a Westminster Abbey evensong, having class at the Tate Modern, engaging in community service as well as partnering with a local British school and visiting an American international school.

All-in-all, the faculty will strive to have each discipline covered during the immersion study program. Yes, the students and teachers will be working hard, but the value-added learning experiences will be medal winning. When the students return to their studies back in Connecticut, they will be challenged to make some personal meaning of their study experiences and prepare for their

oral presentations, defining who they are, and what makes them their personal best. This is the first and essential element of the Stanwich Senior House experience: the development of a personal philosophy of excellence.

The Six "C's"

Our junior year global summit in 2013, currently being formalized and planned, will require Stanwich leaders who, along with other global leaders of tomorrow, will seek to understand, seek to be understood, and then seek to make a positive difference in the world. As National Association of Independent Schools president, Patrick Bassett, expressed:


"The Stanwich Global Summit on Spirituality (SGSS) encompasses the three tenets of the school (striving to be one's person best, striving to help others be their best, and striving to make God's world a better place) and manifests exactly the larger conceptual and philosophical framework of a 'school of the future,' one centered on the "Six C's," the skills and values that the 21st century will demand and reward: critical thinking, creativity, collaboration, communication, character, and cosmopolitanism.



Stanwich manifests exactly the ... philosophical framework of a 'school of the future,' one centered on the "Six C's," the skills and values that the 21st century will demand: critical thinking, creativity, collaboration, communication, character, and cosmopolitanism.

anism (cross-cultural competency). A 21st century school like Stanwich that organizes its curriculum and signature programs around these skills and values will soon become the standard for excellence in American education."

Spirit Building

In this New Year, in this Olympic year, may the Stanwich spirit keep building and making a distinct difference for the families committed to its excellence. Onward and upward! 

Pre-K Cottage



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



Celebrating the Holidays

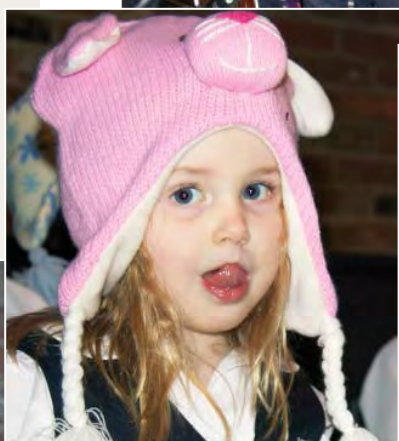
Sporting special reindeer headbands that they made, Pre-K students celebrated Christmas and Hanukkah with a festive holiday program of songs. The children also decorated centerpieces that they shared with special loved ones.

New Year's Resolutions

It is time for New Year's Resolutions. For January, the Pre-K will:

- Learn about the plants and animals that live in rainforests
- Continue to feed Alphabetty as we learn more letters and sounds
- Explore different ways to measure objects with scales and tapes
- Practice dressing in layers to keep warm during recess
- Enjoy a visit from Nappy and his puppets
- Read stories with Miz Liz, sing songs with Madame Covney, and play games with Mr. H
- Continue to learn and play together

We are excited to welcome 2012!!!



Primary House

Spirit and Joy



Julie Colligan
Head of Primary House

"The Gift is in the Giving;" truly it is! One of my most treasured days in the Primary House is the day that the Grade 3 Values classes receive their Angel Tree assignments. The Angel Tree is an opportunity for each Grade 3 child to be a special angel for a child ranging in age from infancy to age 11. A wonderful feeling of anticipation develops in the room as the third graders choose a name tag revealing the first name and age of the child for whom they will purchase a special gift and our third graders respond with such spirit and joy!

We discuss carefully selecting the requested gift and thoughtfully wrapping it and the very next day, the gifts began to arrive. Our angels proudly showed me their gifts at arrival and thoughtfully displayed them in their classrooms. Also this year, Kindergarten through Grade 2 gave gifts to Kids in Crisis. Kindergarten filled the mitten tree with hats, mittens, gloves and scarves. Grade 1 added shirts and pants and Grade 2 gave new games. It is a thrill for the teachers and me to witness the joy of giving in such pure form.

The Joy of the Season

To tell the Hanukkah and Christmas stories, PH students dressed as Judeans, angels, sheep, and cattle and sang in English, French, Hebrew, and Latin. Included in the program were renditions of *O Hanukkah, Henei Mah Tov, Angels We Have Heard on High* and *Joy to the World*.



Intermediate House



Meaghan Mallin
Head of
Intermediate House

Tomorrow

There is a certain magic that happens when the Stanwich community comes together, and that magic was palpable during the IH production of *Annie*. The show was delightful, charming, and bursting with that special Stanwich energy! The annual musical is a huge undertaking and we want to thank everyone who played a role in making it possible. Parents, Upper School students and teachers, and IH faculty all worked together to make the show the success that it was. More than sixty of our IH students took part in the show and every single one was a shining star on that stage! Our kids could not have made us more proud, as the joy of their performance resonated throughout the audience (*photos on the Back Page*).

And the joy of *Annie* didn't stop after the final performance. At a Grade 6 cast party at a restaurant later that evening, our students found themselves in the same room as a couple celebrating their wedding rehearsal dinner. As the wedding party delivered their speeches about the special day that would be happening tomorrow, our Grade 6 cast had their very own "Glee moment" and spontaneously began serenading the happy couple with *Tomorrow!* The bride cried tears of joy and the happy couple declared that if they ever have a little girl, she will be named, "Annie." How amazing for our students to spread the Heart of Stanwich in such a beautiful and heartfelt way.

India Day

To highlight their studies on ancient India as part of their ancient civilizations curriculum, fifth-graders were immersed in Indian culture and received a sense of "all things India," including food, clothing, dance, Hindi writing, Indian games, and Bollywood videos.



Holiday Concert

To celebrate the holiday season, IH Band, Orchestra, and Choir groups performed in the auditorium at Central Middle School.



Civil War Wax Museum

Students in Grade 4 learn about the Civil War in their history lessons, write a five-paragraph essay about the strengths of the North, and read historical fiction novels. Then each student researches a Civil War character and writes a speech telling the person's life story. Dressed in costume, students come to life when a parent or other visitor drops a chip in their cup to hear their speech.



Junior House



Jerome Murphy
Head of Junior House

A Lesson in Itself

Having recently completed the first semester exam period at the Junior House, it is interesting to reflect on the philosophy behind exams and how we, as educators, assess our students. In looking at the college landscape, we find some schools turning more toward the form of a project – for example, in the form of an extended essay, a presentation – to assess students. Schools are also frequently using online methods to evaluate students' understanding of subject matter. At Stanwich, we feel a combination of projects and exams each semester helps our students' awareness of the different ways we can evaluate their proficiency in class.

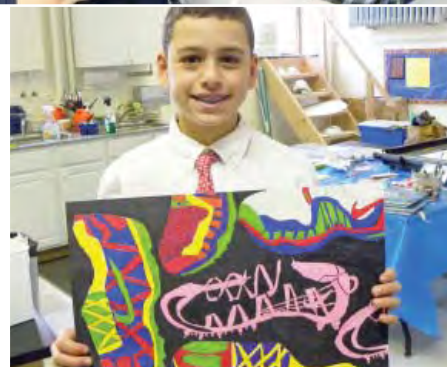
Regardless of the different methods used by educators at all grade levels, what remains constant is the goal of an assessment: to show a student's level of understanding of the subject matter. I submit, however, that assessments, particularly in the cases of tests or exams covering larger bodies of material, serve to evaluate far more than comprehension of subject matter.

As I discussed with each grade in the week leading up to exams, preparing for exams is a lesson in itself. Learning how to organize three months of material, learning how to pro-actively seek guidance from teachers when needed, learning how to organize and discipline oneself in the studying process are all invaluable skills present to be learned during the exam process. More importantly, these are skills which will serve all of our kids well as they go forward in life.

Judging from some of the early exam results, it is clear our Stanwich students prepared well for their exams. Their success is a testament to their keen understanding of the process and their commitment as students to being the best they can be.

Holiday Performance

In front of an enthusiastic audience, the Upper School Band, Orchestra, Bell Choir, Encore Choir, and Choir groups gave a wonderful concert. Music included: *A Christmas Symphony*, *Themes from Handel's Messiah*, *Hanukkah Nagilah*, and *Somewhere In My Memory*.



Art Show

In concert with the holiday performance, students displayed original works of art they had been working on the past semester.



Senior House



Derek Krein
Head of Senior House

Near and Far

In recent weeks the Grade 10 students have had learning opportunities that have been focused both near and far. "Near" came in the form of a visit from Mayor Pavia of Stamford to Stanwich East. Upper School history and math teacher, Ms. Pia, arranged for the visit which afforded Stanwich students a forum to engage in a candid "Q & A" with the mayor. Over the course of his responses, Mayor Pavia emphasized the importance of asking thoughtful questions, listening actively and intently, and selfless collaboration – skills he employs daily in his work. Students gained insight into why Mayor Pavia went into public service and the sense of gratification he derives every day from trying to make life better for individuals and groups. Mayor Pavia's inspiration and the Stanwich mission are not too far apart.

"Far" has taken two forms. Every visit students make to the fourth floor brings them around the globe. Two rows of flags representing members of the United Nations now adorn the hallway ceiling from end to end, nearly fifty flags in all. As each flag was hung, Grade 10 students and their collective curiosity were taken to places they never knew existed. While some were up on ladders, others were looking at the oversized world map that spans part of the fourth floor wall to locate a flag's geographical origins. In the second "far," students have begun their weekly presentations to each other about the places the class will visit during Stanwich's inaugural International Studies Program trip in March. They are familiarizing themselves with the history, layout, cultures, and sights of London that will serve as their interactive classroom for seven days.

Each of these learning opportunities serves to broaden our students' individual and collective understanding of how they can make God's world – whether right in front of them or over the horizon – a better place.

Thank You, Mr. Mayor

The Stanwich School recently hosted Michael Pavia, the Mayor of Stamford, marking an important day in the study of civics and politics for Stanwich's sophomores. Mayor Pavia spoke to the tenth-grade class about his role as the leader of the state's fourth-largest city, and the challenges of elected office. The student panel, made up of Ms. Pia's Civic Pillars elective, included Caroline Drennen, Garsy Presumey-Leblanc, Randy Maldonado, and Gordon Ziegler. These students prepared questions and lead the discussion.

When asked by the student panel why he decided to go into politics, Mr. Pavia turned the question around and asked the students what the term "politics" means to them. In the end, he spoke about how politics was really all about public service.

Mayor Pavia also spoke about how his schedule varied from day-to-day. For example, one day could start at 7:00am and end at 10:00pm with a dozen meetings in between, while on other days, he goes to speak at schools, such as Stanwich, and talks with his constituents. He added that if he wasn't the mayor, he would most likely be a history teacher.

When the topic changed to the extra "perks" of being mayor, Mr. Pavia said that he enjoyed being recognized in public because it meant that people were paying attention. He jokingly added that preferential parking wasn't a bad bonus, either.

"Meeting the mayor was a humbling experience," said tenth-grade student David Rivera. "Knowing that he put in the time to visit with us shows me that he's committed to improving and helping the community."






Chris Cardarelli
Director of Athletics

Stanwich's New Synthetic Turf Athletic Field: A "Field of Dreams" Come True

To borrow a few words from the immortal, Yankee great, Lou Gehrig, "Today we feel like the luckiest PE staff on the face of the earth." The Stanwich School athletic department is eagerly anticipating the spring season as the new athletic field at Stanwich will be completed. The physical education staff and the Stanwich community look forward to the upcoming years as we have a beautiful new field to play on. The new state-of-the-art field will be Stanwich's home for Upper School soccer, field hockey and lacrosse. The field will also be used regularly for Lower School physical education classes and activities in the fall and spring.

SOCCER & LACROSSE COMPETITION

This spring will mark the debut of the new field as the upper school boys' and girls' lacrosse teams will call the field at Stanwich home. Potential visitors to Stanwich for the boys' lacrosse team will be Fairfield Country Day, Greens Farms, King, New Canaan Country School and St. Luke's. Schools that will visit the girls' lacrosse team will be Greenwich Catholic, Holy Child, Masters and Rippowam-Cisqua.



"Let there be turf!"
— Mr. Higle

"I have a lot of great memories on the old field ... but I'm looking forward to being part of a lot more on the new one." — Mr. Riveles

"The new turf field will enhance all our programs from Kindergarten through the Upper School." — Mrs. Angelis

Parent Association

Dear Stanwich Community,



Welcome back and happy New Year! I hope you all had a wonderful holiday. The Parent Association is gearing up for our annual Charter Day activities later this month as we celebrate Year 14 at Stanwich. On Friday, January 27th, our children will be involved in many school activities, concluding with celebration cupcakes. On Saturday, January 28th, we will have our Parent Party at the First Presbyterian Church in Greenwich. We decided to move this to the following day (has always been held on a Friday night in the past), so mark your calendars; the party will begin at 6:30 and invitations will be sent shortly. We look forward to seeing you there, and as in the past, there is no charge for our Stanwich parents. So come and socialize with parents and faculty, you will be sure to have a great time!

Our second Open PA Meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, February 1st and will feature our Grade 9 Dean, Shaun Fletcher, who will speak about Project Blessing. This is a project involving a village in Rwanda where Stanwich 9th Grade students have raised funds over the past 5 years to help build a well, school house, etc and visit every June. Please join us and learn about this special community service project.

While April may seem like a long time from now, our Benefit Committee is well underway for our exciting party, Stanwich is Singing, which will be held on Friday, April 27th at L'Escale Restaurant in Greenwich. It is a beautiful setting and the committee is hard at work to make this another very special and fun event for our parents and faculty. Save the date and please let Anastasia Brien, our Benefit Chair, know if you would like to join her committee.

Our nominating process is gearing up and I will report on that next month. In the interim, please let me know if I can answer any questions you might have about the Parent Association.

—Wynn McDaniel, Parent Association President, 2011-2012

Announcements from the PA

Charter Day Celebration! Saturday, January 28

CHARTER DAY is the day the state of Connecticut recognized The Stanwich School as a new school by signing our charter certificate. Classes commenced the following September. We are marking our 14th year!

* A day filled with “birthday” activities and giving for the whole Stanwich Community:

- The PH students make Stanwich birthday hats and IH students decorate their shoes and wear them to school on Charter Day; Friday, January 27th
- Upper School buddies visit the PH & IH students
- The whole school enjoys cupcakes
- Special art projects are made by students and presented at the parent Birthday Celebration the evening of January 28.



All Primary House students should come to school on Charter Day with a homemade birthday hat. Be creative – give it a Stanwich theme!

Saturday, January 28th • 6:30 - 8:30pm

First Presbyterian Church, 1 West Putnam Avenue, Greenwich • Invitations to be sent shortly

SAVE THE DATE - FRIDAY, APRIL 27

Stanwich is Singing - April 27th - plans for our annual parent party are underway! Please contact our Benefit Chair, Anastasia Brien, anastasiabrien@mac.com, if you are interested in joining her committee.



Classroom in Chabatanzi built through donations received through Project Blessing

Parent Association Meeting - Wednesday, February 1 • 8:00am • IH Assembly Room

Save the date and please join Shaun Fletcher, Grade 9 Dean, who will speak about Project Blessing. This is a project involving a village in Rwanda where Stanwich Grade 9 students have raised funds over the past 5 years to help build a water well, school house, etc. This meeting is open to the Stanwich community, please join us and learn about this special community service project.

COMMUNITY SERVICE HIGHLIGHTS

In December, each House was filled with many Community Service events: the Pre-K had the Hat and Mitten Collection for Head Start; Grades K-2 collected hats, mittens, shirts, pants and games for Kids in Crisis, Grade 3 bought gifts for children at Greenwich Social Services; the IH students made holiday garlands for Nathaniel Witherell and the Upper School students participated in the "Sharing Shelf" moving day (an organization that provides clothing to those in need in Westchester County) and a food drive for the Stamford Food Bank.

This winter, the IH students will write letters to our troops and the president of the Circle of Care will join an Upper School Assembly. The Circle of Care is an organization started by two moms from New Canaan and it is their goal to provide a "Gift of Love" on the day a child is diagnosed with cancer. The students will make 50 fleece pillows which are part of the "Gift of Love" and present them to Circle of Care on the day of the assembly.



The Primary House entryway is filled with holiday gifts that were donated to local organizations

ARTS & ENRICHMENT HIGHLIGHTS

On Thursday December 1st, Upper School students were treated to a riveting account of "The World of Anne Frank." Through the blending of video, audio and personal discussion, the students were taken step by step through the harrowing experiences of Anne and the Frank family during World War II.

Throughout the enrichment program, the students were challenged to explore their awareness of prejudices and stereotypes.

On Friday, December 9, the Lower School students were entertained by "Marvelous Mutts," a group of energetic dogs who have been rescued and trained to perform in front of audiences, while bringing attention to the plight of abandoned dogs.



Coming up next month: Author and illustrator, Henry Neff will give a brief workshop to the IH, while parent speaker, Susan Kasedde will speak to the Upper School on the role of UNICEF and AIDS.



MAKE A GREEN RESOLUTION

In 2012, the Stanwich Environmental Committee asks you to adopt one or more of these no cost/low cost resolutions.

- 1. Recycle Everything** – New rules allow us to put more items into our recycling bins. Metal, glass, all paper and all plastic.
- 2. Use Reusable Shopping Bags** – For \$1 buy a bag and use it when you shop. Even one bag a week makes a difference.
- 3. Get a Water Bottle (please!)** – Stainless steel bottles start around \$5; get one and use it. It's the ultimate fashion accessory.
- 4. Stop Unwanted Catalogs** – Visit catalogchoice.org and get off unwanted mailing lists. Your mailbox will receive less in 10 weeks.
- 5. Use Cold Water in the Washer** – Cold water cleans clothes. It's true. 90% of the energy comes from heating the water (10% from running the motor). Not convinced? Try warm!
- 6. Run a Full Dishwasher** – Washing a full load of dishes in the dishwasher uses one-third less water than hand washing. And use air dry instead of heat dry, of course!
- 7. Don't Idle Your Car** – Save money and protect people's health by turning off your engine.



NEASC Accreditation

The NEASC Self-Study process involves four distinct phases.

Phase 1 of the Self-Study process is now nearly complete. During this phase, which began in September, a Steering Committee was formed and created a plan of action, faculty undertook a comprehensive review of the curriculum, and all constituents were surveyed.

Phase 2 begins in earnest this month. During the second phase, every aspect of the Stanwich program will be evaluated according to a set of Standards and Indicators dictated by NEASC. Committees comprised of administrators, faculty members, staff members, members of the Board of Trustees, parents, and even students will meet regularly between January and March to consider in detail how Stanwich School adheres to the Standards. At the conclusion of phase two, a written report will be prepared documenting compliance with the NEASC Standards and Indicators and making recommendations that will enhance the student experience and foster School improvement.

Phase 3 will begin after the March break and continue through the end of the school year. During phase three, the Steering Committee will reflect on the findings of the Self-Study and prioritize ideas for school improvement.

Phase 4, finally, a Visiting Committee composed of educators from peer schools will make an on-site inspection of Stanwich in the fall of 2012. During this final phase, the Visiting Committee will validate the Self-Study, make recommendations, and advise NEASC on Stanwich School's application for accreditation.

We will keep you apprised of our progress as the Self-Study continues. If you have any questions, please contact Paul Geise at pgeise@stanwichschool.org.

The Broadway classic, *Annie*, was brought to life by the Intermediate House students. More than 80 Stanwich students performed, worked backstage, worked lights and effects and served as crew on this production.



Thank You!

The Stanwich School Faculty extends a heart-felt "thank you" to the Stanwich parent community for their generous holiday gift.



**2012-2013
Academic Year Calendar**

The academic year calendar can be found online at www.stanwichschool.org/about/academic_calendar.asp