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KURN HATTIN HOMES FOR CHILDREN

# *Bulletin*

**2014 VOLUME 1**



# NEW KURN HATTIN LOGO

Kurn Hattin Homes for Children has a new look! Unveiled at the 118th Annual Meeting of the Corporation in October, the newly designed Kurn Hattin bridge logo is part of a comprehensive awareness initiative aimed at increasing public awareness of Kurn Hattin Homes for Children and its 120-year-old mission, and promoting understanding of the children and families it serves. The image of a child and an adult walking together across a bridge was selected based on feedback and input from both internal and external focus groups. “The bridge communicates the support and guidance Kurn Hattin Homes provides for children as they make the transition to a brighter future,” explained Co-Executive Director Connie Sanderson. “It’s a transformative experience for them, and Kurn Hattin provides a safe, sure path.” The awareness initiative also features the call to action, “Join Their Journey,” and the Kurn Hattin website features new video interviews of recent graduates sharing the stories of their own personal journeys and transformation through their time at Kurn Hattin. We invite you to visit the Kurn Hattin Homes for Children website at [www.kurnhattin.org](http://www.kurnhattin.org) to hear these courageous children and their incredibly moving stories. It is also Kurn Hattin’s 120th Anniversary. See our special Anniversary logo on the back cover.



## KURN HATTIN HOMES FOR CHILDREN

# Bulletin

2014 Volume 1



**On the Cover:** Eighth grader Kaylee Cherbonneau finds a heart-shaped leaf during an outdoor classroom English project.

**Photo Credit:** Kristie Lisai

### Table of Contents

What’s Ahead for Business Operations and Institutional Advancement? . . . . .	2
Mid-Year Reflections . . . . .	3
A Wide Array of Experiences . . . . .	4
Bigger Than a Grammy . . . . .	5
Unselfish Acts . . . . .	6
Mutual Goal of Success . . . . .	7
Alumni Association President’s Message . . . .	8
Alumni Drop-Ins . . . . .	8
Emerging Voices: Featuring the Creative Gifts of Our Students Past and Present . . . . .	9
Back Home and Part of a Team . . . . .	10
Kurn Hattin Homes for Children Charles A. Dickinson Award . . . . .	11
Kurn Hattin Album . . . . .	12
Every Gift Matters. . . . .	16
Thank You Corporate Supporters . . . . .	17
Memorial Gifts . . . . .	18
Honor Gifts. . . . .	22

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## *What's Ahead* FOR BUSINESS OPERATIONS AND INSTITUTIONAL ADVANCEMENT?

2013 drew to a close with below zero temperatures and crisp air, the kind that tickles the inside of your nose. Winter is a time for reflection, and a time for looking ahead. Farmers brave the crisp air to take stock of their maple sugaring equipment and lines, and to check the orchards for any trees needing some tender care. By the time you read this article, the maple trees will have been tapped and the apple trees pruned.

The indoor farmers, Kurn Hattin's administrators, also take stock in the winter. They look at how the organization fared during the year, what economic conditions caused success or opportunities for growth, and they forecast the upcoming year's path to sustainability.

Each department at Kurn Hattin Homes for Children follows a set of initiatives in a comprehensive Strategic Plan.

The Development Department, now headed by Kim Fine, longtime Senior Development Officer, is focusing on incorporating staffing changes and evolving job descriptions, while continuing to explore new opportunities for donors to support our work. As a charity dependent on private support for almost 95% of its operating budget, the work of the Development staff is critical to the organization's future. A new position, Assistant Director of Development, was added to the roster last fall to assist in enhancing fundraising initiatives. Aply filled by Falana Lisa Bloch, a seasoned development professional, this new role will help to position Kurn Hattin to address significant needs in the future.

The Finance Department welcomed a new accountant, Kathleen Gurney, in September. With a wealth of experience, it seems to an outsider that her transition has been seamless. Steve Fitch continues to lead the Finance Department as well as Information Technology. Both departments play a critical role in ensuring integrity: the integrity of our endowment and operating funds, and the integrity of our technology infrastructure.

The Human Resources Department is transitioning the organization to a new EAP (Employee Assistance Program) provider. Candace Caggiano, coordinator in HR, looks ahead in 2014 to how new health care laws will affect our staff, and to rolling out a comprehensive new staff manual. She also serves as our facilities compliance officer, a part of her job that requires attention to detail and understanding of the many regulations to which an organization must adhere.

Please take time to read Sue Kessler's article on page 7. In addition to her student recruitment responsibilities, she now oversees family outreach efforts, a change that brings together two departments into a new configuration we are now referring to as Enrollment Management.

The Marketing Awareness Initiative is proud to report being almost a year ahead of schedule in securing national media attention for Kurn Hattin Homes for Children. Lisa Bianconi's Grammy nomination for Music Educator of the Year, coupled with strengthened efforts to bring media from all over the Northeast to campus, is resulting in exciting exposure.

The Board is shifting its focus with the aggressive work of Task Forces and making plans in 2014 to hold a retreat to further its role supporting the mission of Kurn Hattin Homes for Children.

As winter turns to spring, the seasons and decades continue to cycle, and the work of an organization committed to bettering the lives of those who need help continues to flourish. The vision of our founder, Reverend Charles Albert Dickinson, who imagined in 1894 a place where all could find hope, lights our way.

~ Connie Sanderson  
Co-Executive Director Business Operations and Institutional Advancement

## MID-YEAR *Reflections*

As I look back on the first half of the 2013-2014 school year, one major modification made to our program was the addition of seventh and eighth grade day students from the Westminster community. Six day students have joined our program, and they have acclimated and assimilated well. The students are immersed in all academic programs and after school activities. The day students and their families have enhanced our program with their talents and family goals. Additionally, we have strengthened our collaboration with the local community and Westminster Elementary School, and our program and mission have become more clearly understood in the local area.



We serve between ninety and one hundred residential students in a comprehensive program. The academic program provides challenges across varying ability levels in literacy, mathematics, social studies, language arts, science and agriculture. The music program continues to reach new heights, performing with the Windham Orchestra, Grammy-winning fiddler Natalie MacMaster, Vermont Music Educators District VI Choir and singing for the Governor at the Vermont State House Christmas Tree Lighting Ceremony. Twenty of the fifty-five older students earned honor roll in the first quarter, and seventeen students were selected to the District Choir, while eighty percent of our students participated in athletics. Our middle school students participate annually in the VFW Patriot's Pen Essay Contest, and three of our students won top honors for their essays on "What Patriotism Means to Me."

In the cottages, social skills, self-esteem development, hygiene awareness and healthy drug-free choices continue as objectives of our mission. A variety of after school activities, such as religious education, field trips, student council community service projects and holiday related activities reinforce our objectives. Student council members served at two community fundraisers, donated to the food shelf, Christmas caroled and presented their cottage charitable projects at the Night of Giving.

In the Counseling Department, we have restructured the counselors' case loads and reassigned a counselor to the school program during the academic day. Additionally, we have been improving our response style centered on attachment disorder issues. Attachment disorder is described often as emotional, social and behavioral problems caused by a failure to form normal attachments during early childhood. Staff have been in training throughout the year to better equip the children with the methodologies necessary to successfully address attachment issues. We have collaborated with the New England Attachment Disorder Institute in developing our skills in this area.

With the continued support of our donors and staff, we will continue to provide programs that meet the needs and transform the lives of our children.

~ Thomas Fahner  
Co-Executive Director Academic and Residential Life



## A WIDE ARRAY OF *Experiences*

We have had a busy and productive autumn! Our students enjoyed a wide range of events intended to meld academics, athletics and music to encourage their successful transition into the Kurn Hattin community.

Our annual 8th grade retreat at the Mello's retreat house marks the beginning of our school year. The 2014 graduating class began their year setting goals and learning strategies to help them to achieve their objectives. Our musicians immediately began rehearsing for a wide array of public performances, including our annual trip to the Big E where we rode rides and ate fair food before marching in the parade and performing on live television.

Our traditional autumn activities commenced as usual. Our farm manager collaborated with our science teachers to plan theme weeks devoted to apple-picking and cider-making, autumn chores, dairy and holiday crafts. Our students and staff worked together during our annual fall Green Up Day to ready our beautiful campus for the winter. Our students performed music and read essays during our annual Veterans Day observance, a solemn event which was well attended and appreciated by veterans from the surrounding communities.

During our new after school Art Club, our students have been able to delve more deeply into their creative interests. Our students and staff enjoyed our "first annual" Spelling Bee. Halloween was big fun! We provide the music for the Westminster Halloween parade, and this year we enjoyed a special thrill in the chilling Haunted Kitchen!

The Kurn Hattin Student Council has been active this fall. They collected food for the local food shelf and planned a Christmas party for our youngest students. Santa was on the guest list! They committed to the second year of our Restorative Justice Program, which acts to provide our community with a student led alternative to traditional disciplinary actions. It is another positive tool in support of our students.

Our students and staff always look forward to Mrs. Prindl's fall visits. She stays on campus every year, working with our students and volunteering in our library. While she was on campus this year, we celebrated her 102nd birthday!

Our young musicians have been incredibly busy, representing our school community with grace and aplomb. Just recently, they auditioned for the WGBY choral competition and were selected to perform on the air! Our Music Director, Mrs. Lisa Bianconi, was a finalist for the first ever Grammy Music Educator Award. Incredible!

Our first electronic report cards were issued this fall, which marks the culmination of a campus-wide effort to become more efficient in our sharing of information with the families that we serve.

Thanks to the entire Kurn Hattin staff for working diligently to provide this rich array of experiences for our students!

~ *Scotty Tabachnick*  
*School Principal*

## *Bigger* THAN A GRAMMY

Kurn Hattin Homes for Children gained national media attention recently after our very own Music Director, Lisa Bianconi, was named a top-ten finalist for the inaugural Grammy Music Educator award. Lisa was featured on CBS Evening News on Monday, January 20th. After viewing her story on TV station WCAX in Burlington, CBS News producer Alex Romano contacted Kurn Hattin and requested a visit to the school and an interview with Lisa. CBS correspondent Michelle Miller made the trip from New York to Kurn



*Lisa Bianconi with students,  
Emebet and Chrystal*

Hattin's campus and spoke with Lisa and several of her students to find out what makes her so special.

Seventh grader, Emebet Stott, who is an orphan from Ethiopia, told Michelle Miller, "When I first came here, I had an attitude, Ms. Bianconi talked to me. The fact that she was right there and listened to me...she felt like the mother I never had." Several other children told their stories and expressed their feelings about being helped by Lisa and her gift of music. Chrystal Longe, who is an honor student, was failing public school when she came to Kurn Hattin. She was being bullied because her parents are deaf. Lisa helped her find the voice no one else could hear.



*Lisa Bianconi with  
CBS News correspondent, Michelle Miller*

Lisa Bianconi, who's been directing music at Kurn Hattin for almost 30 years, is grateful for the attention her story has brought to Kurn Hattin Homes. Representatives from the Grammy Foundation will visit Kurn Hattin's campus in April to present the \$1,000 honorarium she won for making it to the final round. Kurn Hattin Homes will also receive a matching \$1,000 honorarium. Although another music educator was ultimately named the Grammy recipient, Lisa says she feels like a winner. In an interview on New England Cable News, she said, "If I can make even one child's life better through the work that I do, that's as good as a Grammy." Her students agree. As Emebet Stott told CBS, "There will never be something big enough for what she does, even a Grammy. She's bigger than that." The entire Kurn Hattin community celebrated Lisa with an ice cream sundae party, including a Kurn Hattin community autographed celebration banner, flowers and a gift certificate. We couldn't be more proud of our Music Director and the work she does with our students. Congratulations Lisa!



*Lisa Bianconi and Marching Band in  
2013 Memorial Day Parade*

## Unselfish ACTS

So many things enhance the lives of the children in our care. We have a great school program that allows our children to succeed and flourish. We have amazing music, art and horsemanship programs. We offer a wide variety of sports and extra-curricular activities that allow our children to develop healthy habits and life-skills. We have a food service program recognized by the USDA Healthier Schools Initiative. We have staff who are devoted and work to make all these things possible for our children. We are all proud of our organization and the changes that are made in the lives of our children.

Once a year we hold an event that allows our children to give back. The Night of Giving is held the last week before the children leave for Christmas break. It is a formal dinner with the children putting on their finest outfits, and cloth napkins and tables set by the cottage that is in charge of the dining room for the week. Each cottage has a server who waits on his or her table. The kitchen staff prepares a feast that is enjoyed by all. We all exclaim when it's done that it was the best ever and we couldn't imagine eating another bite. That is until the dessert is served, of course! But what makes the night such a moving experience is what each cottage does for its gift. Each cottage works together to decide on a gift to give to a community group, other cottages, Kurn Hattin or a special project. It always amazes me how creative our cottages become during this time. The children work with the houseparents to decide what they are going to give, how they will implement the gift and what they each need to do to make it happen. At the Night of Giving, each cottage has two representatives explain what they are giving as their gift. Our six Day Students also got together and presented a gift. As each cottage presented their gifts, I felt like a proud parent at their enthusiasm for sharing and their thoughtfulness. The common thread throughout their presentations was that they are blessed with so many things. They enjoy giving back to make someone else's life a little more pleasant.

Hubbard Cottage did a drive to collect food and toys for a local animal shelter. Parent Cottage thanked each cottage by making a Snowman Making Kit. The day students will host a popcorn/movie party. Maysilles Cottage is doing a year-long project of Acts of Kindness. They have planted bulbs in Brattleboro, Vermont, made and sent Christmas cards, and have made snacks for other cottages. Morrison Cottage pooled their money and bought toys to donate to Toys for Tots. Woodhull Cottage went to Santa's Land, sang Christmas carols, and then spread the Christmas cheer around campus. Turrell Cottage used their Caught Being Good coupons and bought items to fill shoe boxes to send to children in the Philippines. Warner Cottage hosted a food drive for David's House at the Children's Hospital at Dartmouth-Hitchcock Medical Center. Butler Cottage collected money and made a donation to the Brattleboro Christmas Stocking so other children could be warm. Dickinson Cottage made Christmas cards, collected DVDs, books and CDs, and wrote letters to soldiers who are serving overseas. These unselfish acts remind us all that we are not only providing our children with an education and teaching community involvement, empathy and about helping our neighbors, but also teaching them the joy of helping those who are less fortunate. Together we are building our future.

~ Karen Lansberry  
Director of Residential Services

## MUTUAL GOAL OF Success

Families often tell us in the Admissions Department about the complicated and conflicting emotions they experience as they consider Kurn Hattin as an option for their child. As one mother put it, "I wanted the very best for my son. I knew that Kurn Hattin has the structure he needs and that we couldn't provide it for him at home. Plus there are so many great things for him to do there that aren't available to him here. It's just so hard to think of him not being home with us every day." She went on to describe her first contact with us and how difficult it was for her to actually pick up the phone and call. Among other things, she felt that she was letting her son down by not being able to offer him all that he needed. Then she described how reassured she felt after our first phone conversation. She arranged to come to campus for a visit and visibly relaxed while she was touring and talking with the welcoming staff at the school and cottages. Getting acquainted with the people at Kurn Hattin helps families feel much more comfortable.

Once a child has completed the application process, been accepted and an enrollment date is on the horizon, the first in a series of transitions begins. The Admissions and Family Outreach Departments work together to support and encourage children and their families through all of the changes they will be facing. This support and encouragement begins even before the children's enrollment, continues on through their time living on campus, and extends through the next transition period as they prepare to leave campus, whether this involves graduating or a planned return home sometime before 8th grade. The connection and support continues beyond their time on campus as each child becomes a new member of the Alumni Association.

The connections built with family members are critical to our mutual goal of success for each child. The Family Outreach Department focuses on support and assistance for families of current students, guidance and assistance for families of 8th graders as they navigate the process of deciding where their children will attend high school, and also on maintaining solid connections with alumni.

We'd love to hear from you to discuss a child who could benefit from the opportunities that Kurn Hattin has to offer. Please contact the Admissions Department at (802) 721-6932 or [skessler@kurnhattin.org](mailto:skessler@kurnhattin.org).

~ Sue Kessler  
Director of Admissions

## 2014 Annual Fall Conference

For details please contact Sue Kessler  
at (802) 721-6932 or [skessler@kurnhattin.org](mailto:skessler@kurnhattin.org)



# Alumni Association PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

In 1950, I was at Kurn Hattin for just a couple weeks when one of the older girls took me outside to show me how to blow across a soda bottle to make a sound. Depending on how much liquid was in the bottle, I could make a different tone. This qualified me to play the flute and I was soon blowing across the mouthpiece of the flute and pressing pads over holes to make music. I also learned to read music. If I'm not mistaken, Mrs. Oberman was my teacher and she also directed the girls' chorus. Meanwhile, at the boys department, my younger brother Bernard was learning the clarinet from Mrs. Mayo. About a year later my youngest brother Francis "Tim" arrived and was seated on a piano bench with Mrs. Mayo. He too was learning to play and read music. We would gather each week to play in the band under the direction of Mr. Musgrove.

In high school, I received the Music Award. Today I think my life would not be as wonderful if I could not attend the Florida Orchestra series. Francis, who learned to play the clarinet, has had a wonderful career as a high school music teacher and, now retired, conducts a community chorus. Bernard has a degree in music and is the bass section leader in his church choir and participates in a professional singing chorus specializing in chant music. I have a grandson now studying vocal performance at the Boston Conservatory of Music.

Every year when I attend the Annual Alumni Meeting and Kurn Hattin Day, I feel blessed to see and hear the children perform in a more expanded music program. The talent of the various choruses and bands is so appreciated.



It is a wonderful gift – a life-long gift – the gift of music. Thank you, Kurn Hattin for the gift treasured by thousands of children who have had the experience of the music program at Kurn Hattin Homes for Children.

p.s. Hope to see you at the Centennial Celebration of the Alumni Association in August!

~ Jackie LaDue Mallory, Class of 1954  
Alumni Association President

The LaDue graduates:  
Francis "Tim", Jackie and Bernard

## Alumni DROP-INS: 07/27/13-01/27/2014

Here is a list of Kurn Hattin Alumni who have stopped in for a visit recently. We hope more alums will just drop in!

ASHLEY BUSSINO.....CLASS OF 2012  
DEVIN BUSSINO ..... CLASS OF 2011  
CPL LUGY CABRERA .....CLASS OF 2003  
DOMINIC CHERBONNEAU .....CLASS OF 2013  
MARVIN C. COBLE .....CLASS OF 1968  
MARIO GIANNONE .....CLASS OF 1941

LYSSA JACKSON .....CLASS OF 2008  
CODY LACKEY .....CLASS OF 2009  
ADAM LOMBARD .....CLASS OF 2003  
ASHLEY MINCHENKO-DIAZ...CLASS OF 2004  
DAVE MORSE .....CLASS OF 1962  
COOPER NEWELL .....CLASS OF 2011  
D'LEANNE SOLOVEI .....CLASS OF 2013  
TAINIA PEREZ .....CLASS OF 2010  
THOMAS TAYLOR .....CLASS OF 2013

## Emerging Voices

FEATURING THE CREATIVE GIFTS OF OUR STUDENTS PAST AND PRESENT



I was born in Uganda, Africa and lived there with my 10 brothers and sisters. My dad died when I was two years old and my 'sanga' grandmother took care of me. Later Wade and his family wanted to adopt me. He had to wait months till he could adopt me. Then he did. So I went to America on so many plane rides. First I stopped in Texas to meet my grandma and my cousins. Then we flew to Colorado. I lived there for three years and then we moved to Massachusetts. I had my 10th birthday then I started school. I did well the first two years, then I started having trouble. My parents put me with a teacher who helped me with homework. But that did not work. So they told me about this amazing school called Kurn Hattin. I had an interview and they said you can come in four weeks. My parents gave me a sheet that told me what I had to pack. We drove for two and a half hours. It was a good drive to see Vermont and New Hampshire. There were many wild things and beautiful trees and places. When we got to Kurn Hattin, I was nervous. When people said "Hi" or "Hello" or tried to introduce themselves to me, I would get shy and scared and not know what to do. Then I met Mr. Tabachnick, the Principal, and he shook my hand and said, "Did you have a tour?" He showed us around and took us to meet Mr. Fahner. The students I met were so nice to me and they showed me my cottage. I met Mrs. Courtney. She told me the cottage routine. After that I played with the other boys. My roommate said that once you get used to it you will like it here. Then in the morning, I did my chores, ate and went to school. Someone showed me to my classroom. I met my teacher and she caught me up on the work the class was doing. Then months later we all did the summer recreation program. Mrs. Fahner is the summer recreation 'boss'. She helps with swimming and games. I was 'Camper of the Week' and I got to go to Six Flags. Then the summer passed and it was soccer season. I played soccer and we won two games!

~ Mutebi Steven Callison, Grade 5

It was always the same. Always looking at the same blue sky. Always seeing the same color. Always being with the same people. Then no longer green like the rest, growing into my new skin, a caterpillar into a butterfly. In the silence I was different. The moon during the daytime no longer recognized. I knew who I was, but they didn't. I was sure of whom I was becoming but they weren't. Different is who I am. Without it, you could not define me.

~ Susanna Compare, Grade 8

All of us experience change in our lives. Change is the one constant in our lives. There are changes that we look forward to and changes that we fear. However, one thing is for sure, things will not stay the same no matter how much we would like them to. When a life change occurs, we have two choices in how to respond. We can despair that a change has come and assume that things will get worse, or we can look with excitement at the new possibilities that the change presents.

~ Kayley Rogstad, Grade 8

## Back Home AND PART OF A TEAM

Today as Faith Nalette, a houseparent in Warner Cottage, relaxes in her brightly colored apartment with her cat and a cup of tea, she projects a gentle warmth, maturity, and confidence. In 1990, the thirteen-year old Faith Crowe was a shy, new Kurn Hattin student at the girls' campus in Saxtons River, Vermont. A 7th grader arriving in the middle of the year, she was withdrawn and tentative. "It was very hard at first," she remembers.

It was not long before the inclusive Kurn Hattin environment helped her to feel welcome. She fondly recalls that sharing breakfast each morning with her fellow cottage mates was a bonding experience that was grounding and made her feel part of the Kurn Hattin family. She felt awkward about joining in the activities, but as an avid reader, recalls happily spending time with Miss Mundell exploring the library. She had never played an instrument or felt that she was good at sports. Eventually though, Faith participated in the school's color guard. Traditionally, color guard uses flags and props with movement as an expressive visual representation of the music in a marching band. The display requires focus and attention, listening skills, teamwork, and discipline: "It was my first experience being part of a team."

The process of learning unity as part of a group experience made an impression on Faith, enabling her to trust. She began to relax and make friends, and her confidence flourished. As she began to come out of her shell, she also began to achieve in school. "I loved math and especially science class." Praising the structure and health-oriented perspective she reflects, "It made me feel so safe. I really thrived in the structured environment and felt good about myself. It made me want to take care of myself, take pride in my health and appearance."

Although transitioning to public high school was difficult, once Faith graduated she joined the Coast Guard, first as a buoy tender in Maine, then subsequently stationed in Seattle on a polar ice breaker. She later attended Franklin Pierce College and obtained her M.A. in Secondary Education. She wanted to give back by teaching at-risk children and to have a lasting impact doing so. This brought her back to Kurn Hattin. She arrived in Vermont from Denver, Colorado during the summer of 2013 with her husband to interview for the position

of residential houseparent. "I wanted this job so badly! I had moved around a lot and I just wanted to put down roots. As soon as I arrived, it was just like coming home." Faith was hired as a 'live-in' residential houseparent. Now settled in, she says, "I am so comfortable here. I love that the children are getting to just be kids, and enjoy their childhood." Faith still connects with one of her former houseparents, Kim Keefe, and now that she is in that position herself, is trying to emulate her. "She was so calm and very organized." Pausing to reflect upon her life at Kurn Hattin, she considered her own growth and what this means to her. "This work is an emotional investment and a commitment. The rewards are too many to count. It is such a gift when you love where you are in life, who you are, and it is all working."

~ Falana Lisa Bloch  
Assistant Director of Development



Faith Nalette, Class of 1992  
Houseparent

## KURN HATTIN HOMES FOR CHILDREN CHARLES A. DICKINSON Award



Hattin. It's nice to be recognized." Ms. Jones also noted that the baby grand piano which the music program uses was partly funded by NSNEW. She added, "We have a wonderful relationship with the music program."

Charles Dickinson was raised in the small town of Westminster, Vermont, where Kurn Hattin is located. A prominent Boston clergyman in the late 1800's, he worked with homeless and neglected youth in the city. Dickinson then developed his vision to create a home and a school where children in need could experience the kind of childhood he himself enjoyed in Vermont. The 2013 Charles Albert Dickinson Award was designed by artist Robert DuGrenier who has also lent his talent to MTV, the ESPY's and Nickelodeon. He described how he captured the essence of a man with a great vision by saying, "I chose to make a glass portrait that you needed to see through like a window, which I felt was very symbolic."



Linda Brown Jones, NSNEW President General accepting  
the first annual Charles A. Dickinson Award from  
Connie Sanderson, Co-Executive Director

## FROM FACEBOOK



Kurn Hattin Homes  
for Children



981

*"I can't begin to say how much I miss it. It was the best experience I ever had...I spent my childhood in foster homes until Kurn Hattin. They always made sure we had a good time, and made sure that we knew we had someone there for us, and that was all the reassurance I needed."*

~ Brandon Fernandez, Class of 2008



# KURN HATTIN *Album*

In early September, on the Common in Lebanon, New Hampshire and at Landmark College in Putney, Vermont, the Kurn Hattin Choir performed at the Wings of Hope benefit for Hospice of Vermont and New Hampshire. The event included the release of live butterflies to honor friends and family who have passed. Kurn Hattin children sang several musical selections, closing the program with the final song, "Amazing Grace." Music plays an important role in hospice work. "The resonance of music can help patients and their loved ones reach a place of peace and calm inside, and can help them access spiritual resources that may or may not be accessible via faith. Having the Kurn Hattin Home Children's Choir as a part of our Wings of Hope events is so wonderful and so fitting – we are grateful to them for being part of it," said Catherine Hogan the Director of Development & Community Relations for Visiting Nurses & Hospice of Vermont and New Hampshire. Noted Lisa Bianconi, Music Director at Kurn Hattin, "Most of our children come from challenging situations and music gives them strength, power and hope. Performing here, in turn,



provides that strength, power, and hope to the audience. They are sharing their gift of music to celebrate the gift of life."



Luther King Day assembly, and learned about the men and women responsible for effecting positive and progressive change in the advancement of civil rights. Thanks to a grant from the Vermont Arts Council, Vermont percussionist Todd Roach spent a week-long Artist in Residency teaching the children to play Middle Eastern and North African percussion instruments and rhythms. Todd is the founder and Executive Director of The Loft, a performance space and production company in Brattleboro, and an administrator at Kindle Farm School. Staff and special invited guests facilitated daily presentations, courses, and interactive activities engaging the children in thoughtful discussions. The week concluded with a concert with drum group and choral performances, essay awards and poetry readings.

The students and faculty of Kurn Hattin Homes don't just learn about the important issues of justice, equality, and fairness for one day. They learn compassion and equity are a way of life, and essential elements of good character. Martin Luther King Day is an opportunity to spend an entire week learning about civil rights history, and exploring key diversity-related topics. The students kicked off Diversity Week with a Martin

There were special gifts from many dear friends over the holiday season. Christmas Trees of Vermont in Springfield, Vermont donated beautiful trees to Kurn Hattin and each cottage. Representatives from each cottage had a great time visiting the Christmas tree farm and choosing their trees. The children had also created gingerbread houses for a fundraising event that Tim Mollica of Christmas Trees of Vermont was sponsoring. Santa, Mrs. Claus and Mr. Grinch also paid their annual visit to the cottages. Co-Executive Director Tom Fahner met up with them as he was being presented a \$5,000 donation from Chester Rotary President, Ron Theissen. It was noted that Mr. Grinch displayed very good behavior this year. The children have been teaching him well over the years.



Kurn Hattin held its Eighteenth Annual Veterans Day Observance on November 11th. The program, created by Social Studies teacher Richard Long, combined music, speeches, and a solemn candle service. Eighth grade student Chrystal Longe lit 41 candles for each of the Vermont men and women who lost their lives serving the United States during the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. The ceremony attracted two dozen veterans from the area, with many wearing uniforms describing their service. Three students read their winning essays for the Brattleboro VFW Post 1034's annual Patriot's Pen Essay Contest. All three top winners were students from Kurn Hattin. Each won an award for her essay on the theme of "What Patriotism Means to Me." The winners were: First Place, Shelby Taylor, Grade 7; Second Place, Hailey Bliven, Grade 7; and Third Place, Breanna Holmes, Grade 8. A luncheon was held afterward for the veterans and guests. The Patriot's Pen Essay winners were guests of honor at a later date at the VFW in Brattleboro, Vermont.





The young musicians at Kurn Hattin Homes were busy performing at several musical venues this fall and winter. Some of the many performances included Kurn Hattin’s Jazz Ensemble and Select Choir performing a variety of spirited and uplifting songs for the senior residents of Langdon Place in Keene, New Hampshire. Maestro Hugh Keelan and the Windham Orchestra, along with the Kurn Hattin students, joined forces on campus to present “Resounding Hills: A Transformative Musical Collaboration.”



The Choir had a lovely time performing for Riverwoods Retirement Community in Exeter, New Hampshire and Brooksby Village in Peabody, Massachusetts. Seventeen of our most talented 7th and 8th grade vocalists were chosen for a magical performance at Brattleboro Union High School as members of the Connecticut River Valley District VI Middle School Chorus, allowing them to participate in the Vermont Music Educators District VI Fall Music Festival. The marching band played at The Big E Parade in Springfield, Massachusetts. The Annual Governor’s Tree Lighting Ceremony festivities at the Statehouse in Montpelier were kicked off with Christmas carols sung by the Kurn Hattin Children’s Chorus. For a second year, the Select Choir was invited to join Grammy-winning fiddler Natalie MacMaster on stage at the Latchis Theater in Brattleboro, Vermont for her “Christmas in Cape Breton” concert. Once again the Choir was warmly welcomed by members of the Congregational Church in Walpole, New Hampshire. The musical events of 2013 culminated on Christmas Visitors’ Day. This annual holiday celebration and concert is one of Kurn Hattin’s ways of thanking and appreciating its friends and donors.

Liza Fontaine is a sophomore in the Education Program at Endicott College in Beverly, Massachusetts. This past summer she worked with the Kurn Hattin Summer Recreation Program and became a mentor to first grader Donnia Blagrove. Back at Endicott, Liza calls Donnia periodically to check in and make sure all is well. At a recent Family Day on campus, Liza presented Donnia with a birthday present. “I have a sweatshirt from the school you go to (Kurn Hattin), so I wanted you to have a sweatshirt from the school I go to,” she



told Donnia. Someday Donnia may go to Endicott too. Liza is looking forward to having a classroom of her own someday and there she will hang up this picture of the first student she mentored. Kurn Hattin is very fortunate to have Liza and others like her who are mentors to the children. Liza is the daughter of science teacher, Tom Fontaine.



The Kurn Hattin Board of Trustees meets quarterly and, before beginning work on their agenda topics, they are treated to a Mission Moment. This is an opportunity for children and staff to showcase an aspect of the program and give trustees deeper insight into the day to day activities of the organization. Instituted

last year as a standing agenda item, this time with the children has come to be anticipated, and highly appreciated. At the November 2013 meeting Ms. Lisai, English teacher, led her students in presenting a Power Point presentation on poetry written to original student photography. Ms. Lisai is known for her own accomplished photography, and her students have embraced this novel approach to combining poetry writing inspired by their own art. In the photo, taken by Ms. Lisai, the students pose with Board members and other meeting attendees after hearing poems and viewing the visual work of 7th and 8th graders Hailey Bliven, Susanna Compare, Hayley Labrecque, Chrystal Longe and Breanna Holmes.

Kurn Hattin Homes for Children held its 22nd Annual Fall Conference on Friday October 25th. Each year an educational conference is held to offer new opportunities for training and skills development to staff, educators, human service organizations, and community partners. This year’s topic was Treating Trauma and Attachment Issues in Children and Families. The featured speakers were Terry Levy, Ph.D., B.C.F.E. and Michael Orlans, M.A., D.A.P.A., co-founders of the Evergreen Psychotherapy Center and the Attachment Treatment and Training Institute in Evergreen, Colorado. Levy and Orlans (pictured) described attachment as the “deep and enduring connection established between a child and caregiver in the first several years of life. It profoundly influences every component of the human condition - mind, body, emotions, relationships and values. Attachment is not something that parents do to their children; rather, it is something that children and parents create together, in an ongoing reciprocal relationship.” Conference attendees were unanimous in their approval, with the director of a local childcare center with three adopted children of her own describing it as the best conference she had ever attended.



# Every Gift MATTERS

I want to thank each and every one of you for what you give to Kurn Hattin—the knitted mittens and scarves, the duffle bags and backpacks, the new and gently used clothing, horses and farm items, goods for the campus store, and funds for everything from field trips and year round care to post graduate scholarships and special requests. Some are small, some large. All are vital. Truly, every gift matters. We wouldn’t be here without you.



“Kurn Hattin is such a special place,” says Sally MacPhee of the Bellows Falls Women’s Club. “We’re so happy to give our support and have done so for a very long time.” Since Kurn Hattin’s founding, people near and far have supported the Homes. They’ve given what they can. In the early 1920’s, the Granges began collecting money and knitted items to send to the Kurn Hattin children. The local flea market collects cash and gathers and delivers a selection of their best items. Individuals, clubs, civic and other organizations send in annual donations and are very receptive to special need requests. You all give what you can. And every gift matters. You matter. Thank you.

~ Kim Fine  
Director of Development

## Special recognition to the clubs, civic and other organizations who made donations between July 6, 2013 and January 16, 2014:

American Legion Auxiliary #7	Ladies Church Circle Townshend Church	State of Arkansas Colony NSNEW #162
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One person can make a difference, and everyone should try. ~ John F. Kennedy

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*We are thankful for memorial contributions which help us help the children. The names of those being remembered appear in BOLD CAPITAL letters and are followed by the names of those who made the gifts. Bold names followed by a year indicate graduates of Kurn Hattin. The gifts listed were received between July 27, 2013 and January 27, 2014.*

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## FOR CHILDREN

*Founded and incorporated in 1894*

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R. Williams, Chair

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**ASSISTANT SECRETARY**

George Nostrand Bellows Falls, VT

**TREASURER**

Janet Wilson Walpole, NH

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CORPORATION OFFICERS**

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Ruth L. DeMone, *Clerk* Peabody, MA

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**ADMINISTRATIVE STAFF**

Connie Sanderson, CFRE  
*Co-Executive Director*

Thomas G. Fahner, M.S.  
*Co-Executive Director*

Kim Fine, M.A., CFRE  
*Director of Development*

Stephen R. Fitch, M.A.  
*Financial Manager*

Jennifer Jacobs, M.A.  
*Director of Counseling*

Susan Kessler, M. Ed.  
*Director of Admissions*

Karen Lansberry, B.S.  
*Director of Residential Services*

Scott Tabachnick, M. Ed.  
*School Principal*

*\*Alumnus/alumna*

**MISSION STATEMENT**

*Kurn Hattin Homes transforms the lives  
of children and their families forever.*

