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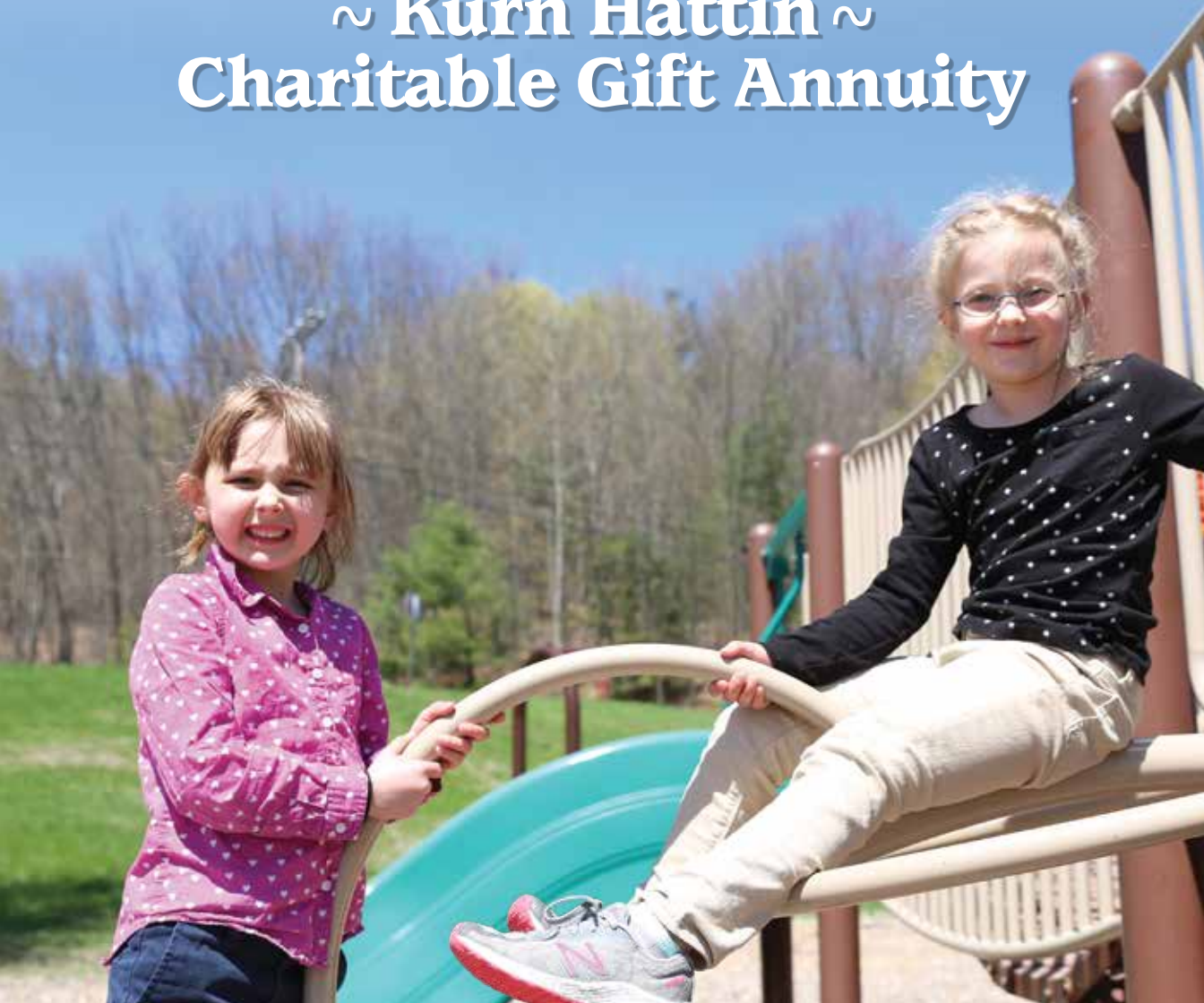
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Bulletin
2019 VOLUME 2

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KURN HATTIN HOMES FOR CHILDREN

Bulletin 2019 Volume 2



On the Cover:

Daxton, Rosie, and Kade
 having fun at recess. The boys
 were posing for a photo and
 Rosie "photobombed".

Photo Credit:

Kristie Lisai 2019

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MESSAGE FROM THE *Executive Director*

Kurn Hattin is in the middle of celebrating our 125th Anniversary! We've had historic book updates, music tours, parades, festivals, parties, historic displays in our communities, and much more—all to promote the Homes' successes in working with children for 125 years. Over these years we estimate that we have served the needs of between 4,000 to 6,000 children who have mostly grown up to be solid, contributing members of our communities. Many of our alumni have gone on to find terrific success in life—Presidents and CEOs of companies and corporations, entrepreneurs and founders of businesses, nationally acclaimed performers, attorneys, architects, artists, Emmy-award winners, music-award winners, airline pilots, high-level military officers, teachers, professors, and much more. This year, we have the opportunity to commemorate and **celebrate the successes of Kurn Hattin Homes**.

At Kurn Hattin Day in the spring, it was delightful to have Leslie Ann Dickinson, the great-great-granddaughter of our founder, Reverend Charles Albert Dickinson, visit and publicly share a personal family poem about April Fools' Day that Reverend Dickinson had written at the age of 21 and a letter from him to his former Andover classmates about soliciting their support in founding the Homes. We also enjoyed stories from Class of '42 alumnus Dick Nash, accomplished studio trombonist who played with Henri Mancini and other greats on movie soundtracks and more, and Priscilla Mayo Watson, daughter of "Pete" Mayo, Director of the Homes for 35 years, as they recounted their personal friendship from the early '40s and what life was like at Kurn Hattin in those years. They were like a couple of kids again, trading fun stories back and forth. **Moments like these make anniversary celebrations so meaningful and bring the past alive again.**

Speaking of bringing the past alive again, Real Bazin, our Farm Manager of 32 years, has restored life to a 1942 Farmall Model H tractor. We understand that this tractor was purchased new in '42 and saw many, many years of service on the Kurn Hattin Homes farm. It can be found in many of the old photos from our archives, driven by the boys of the Homes at the time. Mr. Bazin saw the tractor languishing in bad shape beside a barn in Westminster West, Vermont during an EMT call a few years ago, and he learned that it was originally a Kurn Hattin tractor. He purchased the hulk at the time and put it in his shop on campus, waiting for the day when he would restore it. The 125th Anniversary provided the impetus to do the restoration, which took quite some time, but as you can see from the photo, it turned out looking like a beauty! Thank you Mr. Bazin and crew! The tractor is being used this year to pull a Kurn Hattin 125th Anniversary float in some of the area parades. A functional relic from our farm past has received a well-deserved new life.

In light of our 125th Anniversary, we are asking all of our supporters to increase your giving this year in increments of 125. Perhaps this might mean giving an additional \$125 on top of what you have given before or possibly increasing your support by multiples of 125, thus increasing by \$250, \$375, \$500, \$1250, or maybe \$2500! While our mission has remained the same for these 125 years, the cost of operating Kurn Hattin continues to rise. A gift that was adequate ten years ago doesn't make the same impact on a child's life today, so please consider increasing your support today.

Grace and Peace,

~ Stephen Harrison, Executive Director

CELEBRATING OUR 125th Year

In April, we kicked off our celebrations with the Select Choir Star Spangled Heritage Tour. What an amazing experience for all involved—memories for a lifetime!



Kurn Hattin Alumni on Stage at Kurn Hattin Day

In May, over 200 guests, current and former staff, and several alumni from the classes of 1942 to 2013 attended the 32nd Annual Kurn Hattin Day. The day-long event began with a welcome by Executive Director Steve Harrison. Mr. Harrison spoke of Perseverance, Nurturance, Hope, Compassion, and a Sense of Worth—the core values that continue to guide the mission of Kurn Hattin. He next introduced special guest Leslie Ann Dickinson, the great-great-granddaughter of Reverend Charles Albert Dickinson, the founder of Kurn Hattin Homes. She has an amazing wealth of information about the Homes' founder.



Special Guest Leslie Ann Dickinson

There were moving performances by the Kurn Hattin Monarch Dance Ensemble, choirs, and Jazz Ensemble, including a rendition of *Hog's Breath Café*, featuring trombone legend Dick Nash, Class of 1942, who flew in from California to attend Kurn Hattin's anniversary celebration. In 2014, Mr. Nash received Kurn Hattin Homes' Alumni Lifetime Achievement Award at the celebration of the 100th Anniversary of the Alumni Association.



The Kurn Hattin Monarch Dance Ensemble

As Mr. Harrison pointed out in his article, also in attendance was Priscilla Mayo Watson, daughter of W.I. “Pete” Mayo, Kurn Hattin’s Director for 35 years from 1927 to 1962, and her daughter Ginny.

The alumni had their annual meeting and social hour, voted on changes to the by-laws, bid on silent auction items, and tested their knowledge of Kurn Hattin history.

Thanks to Farm Manager Real



Dick Nash ('42) and Priscilla Mayo Watson

Bazin, guests and the children enjoyed our restored Farmall Model H tractor (which will be pulling a 125th celebration float in parades this year and actually won a prize in the Saxtons River, Vermont 4th of July parade!). They also enjoyed perusing the historical exhibit, being interviewed, going on cottage tours, and reminiscing during an ice cream social. It was wonderful to see everyone!

Planning is underway now for a 125th Anniversary Fall Festival—*Old Home Day*. Open to the public on **Saturday, September 21, 2019**, children, families, and the community are invited to experience Kurn Hattin Old Home Day with a barn dance, and craft and food fair. **So put 9/21 from 11 a.m.-3 p.m. on your calendars and hope to see you here!**

Kurn Hattin is 125 years old. Let’s celebrate!

Academic UPDATE

Here are a few of the highlights. This year we celebrated our second school year as a recognized PBiS school with training and structures qualifying us for Tier II status. This training allows for us to offer more targeted interventions for students with higher needs so that they can internalize tools and help themselves be more available to learning in the long run. PBiS success has helped our students see their strengths, understand that they are valued members of a community, and be better able to engage with the excellent instruction opportunities provided by their faculty.



This past year also rolled out our much-anticipated Chromebook program. The current model for technology in schools is generally referred to as one to one. That is, one device per child. The model is shifting away from the idea of going to a lab to learn technology to using technology to learn, everywhere needed! Each student in grades 3-8 has a Chromebook managed with the Google suite to help tailor technology tools to better differentiate instruction. Students will be able to

engage with assignments, research, and assessment tools such as AIMS Web through this platform. Thank you to the donors who made this a reality. We are excited for the next steps!

Looking ahead to the academic year we are excited to be strengthening our commitment as a community to Restorative Practices. Restorative Practices are widely utilized, both in Vermont and around the globe, as a model of building relationships in a community to minimize conflict. Faculty, staff, and students will be trained in the guiding philosophy of restorative practices and how to weave the principles into PBiS and every aspect of our living-learning community—all the more important when working with a population of students who have experienced trauma and struggles before arriving at Kurn Hattin.

We are also thrilled to further our implementation of our new Core Literacy Intervention Program, Fountas and Pinnel’s Leveled Literacy Intervention. With support from Windham Northeast Supervisory Union, we have been able to begin training all Lower School faculty and our Middle School Literacy instructor in this program. This training will continue this coming year as we roll out the full program. We fully expect LLI to be game-changing when it comes to the literacy intervention for our students.

We are grateful for all the support as we move the academic program forward!

~ Sergio Simunovic, Principal

BEING A *Role Model*

Kurn Hattin truly is a magical place. It is a place where you witness children heal and grow, and also where you can forge connections and share joys and triumphs simply by loving yourself and encouraging the children to do the same. Perhaps the greatest lesson I have learned this year is the value of always letting our children see me as a unique individual who can laugh and embrace her own flaws while still being lovable and compassionate. So many of our children come to us believing that they are broken or that their thoughts and ideas simply don't matter. For me, it is therefore equally important that **children learn their own worth and latch on to whatever fires up their lives, without fear of judgement or rejection.**

As the head of residential life, I am in a prime position to model this behavior, by living boldly and allowing children the space to enjoy some of my passions, while also seeking to discover their own interests and talents. The children know that my door is always open to them, and I love involving them in planning events and activities. When circumstances throw us a curveball and force us to adapt, I'm always the first to embrace change and encourage out-of-the-box thinking. Some of the best ideas this year have come from the children responding to the unexpected—a last minute cottage social, for instance, became a memorable space-themed dinner dance, complete with hand-painted planets and glow-in-the-dark balloons as decorations.

Most importantly, I love to show children that **it is OK to stumble**—to be the one who falls while roller skating and gets back up laughing, or the one who scores the lowest during a game of laser tag and still celebrates afterward with an ice cream. With so much of society focusing on perfection and flawlessness, I strive to let all of our children know that failure does not define a whole person. Oftentimes it is our own attitude and unique quirkiness that makes us become the memorable and lovable people that we all strive to be.

~ Nancy Richardson, Director of Residential Services



Vermont Academy mentors and Kurn Hattin 6th graders at Lazer Tag

KURN HATTIN HOMES RESTRUCTURES FOR *Growth & Development*

Kurn Hattin Homes for Children is planning for its future with leadership restructuring. To begin, Admissions Director Sue Kessler, M.Ed has taken on the role of Assistant Executive Director beginning July 1st. She is overseeing direct student services, which include the School, Residential Life, Counseling, Nursing, Food Services, Volunteers, and Admissions. Executive Director Steve Harrison continues to oversee organizational services—those that operate to support the overall organization, the operations of the campus, and the financial aspects of the Homes.

Mr. Harrison stated, “When we considered creating an Assistant Executive Director position, we sculpted it with Sue Kessler in mind; she was such a natural fit for this role. With almost 25 years of Admissions experience at Kurn Hattin, Sue knows the staff, students, and programs already, so there will be no lag time to get her acclimated. I am thrilled to have Sue grow in her work here and to work with her side-by-side to advance our mission of transforming children’s lives.” Board President Mark Bodin added, “The new Assistant Executive Director position will allow Kurn Hattin to continue moving forward to provide a great experience for our children and staff. Sue Kessler brings a wealth of experience and is the perfect person to fill this role.”



Sue says of her new position, “I’m honored to take on the role of Assistant Executive Director and delighted to be overseeing the direct student services at Kurn Hattin Homes. We have an incredible community here, and it has always been a privilege to be part of the fantastic work done by our amazing staff. I’m looking forward to this exciting new opportunity and new structure that will further our mission on behalf of the children we serve.

“My sincere thanks to the Board of Trustees and to the Kurn Hattin Administration for your ongoing support as we move in this new direction. Thank you, also, to everyone for the many wonderful messages of congratulations and encouragement!”

~ Sue Kessler
Assistant Executive Director



Mr. Fontaine's 6th grade science class was busy this spring with hands-on learning. They designed, built, and tested hot air balloons and solar ovens. Students were treated to s'mores, fresh from their solar ovens. Science is fun!



Eight students participated in this year's 4-H Horse Program led by Sara Stine, Kurn Hattin's Horse Program Instructor. The 4-H Horse Program, which spans the school year from September to June for 3rd to 8th graders, consists of several components: Ownership, Responsibility, Bonding, and Attachment—skills many of the Kurn Hattin students find challenging, but need in order to be successful in life. Students choose a horse among our four Norwegian Fjord horses and a New Forest pony, and keep a notebook, recording such things as farrier costs, the horse's weight, measurements, and diet. Every other Friday is dedicated to the care and grooming of their horse or to community service, such as helping at the nearby humane society. Giving back is an important part of the program. When students successfully complete the 4-H Horse Program, they can sign up to participate next year, getting first choice of a horse. Kurn Hattin's unique 4-H Horse Program allows each student to "own" their horse, bonding and attaching in the caring process, which helps tremendously in their own healing and growth. You can read more about Sara and the Kurn Hattin Horse Program in *Northeast Equestrian Life* Volume 2, Issue 3 Early Summer 2019.



Yes, the students learn reading, writing, and arithmetic, but they also have a lot of fun. This year's after-school activities again included a staff vs. 8th grade kickball game. It was a close match, but the staff maintained their streak and came away with the win in the 2019 Vincenzo Ruggiero staff vs. 8th grade kickball game. Congratulations, staff! Other fun after-school events included the annual color/bubble fun run, laser tag, rollerblading and a trip to Boston, Massachusetts to see the Blue Man Group!



On Saturday, June 8, 2019, twenty-one 8th graders graduated from Kurn Hattin Homes. Many received awards. Salutatorian Alex Lowe III told his fellow graduating classmates, "Accept your mistakes instead of rejecting them, but NEVER let them define who you are."

Valedictorian Lillianna Butler, who has been part of the Kurn Hattin community since she was seven years old, gave the Farewell Speech. "My time here is a tremendous part of who I am, and who I hope to become," she said. Congratulations to the Kurn Hattin Class of 2019: (Back from L to R): Mya Lynn Fifield, Tia Mae Willis-Cooper, Mikayla Evelyn Bruce, Kelsea Rebekah Smith, Chan Deng Dowang, Jakobie Alexander Graves-Amidon, Kevin Wayne DeKalb Jr., Jacob Stone Baltazar, Cassidy Alexis Star Martin, Morgen Lynn Goss, Aurianna Amaris Smith. (Front from L to R):

Alixzander Speckert-Ring, Gabriella Janae Taylor, Izabella Arbritia Murphy, Janiyah Diamond Jackson, Alex Wayne Lowe III, Lillianna Grace Butler, Catrina Marie Greene, Nadia Lynette Taylor, Nicholas Anthony Passos, and Alexia Anne Murray. We are proud of you and love you all!





The Kurn Hattin Homes 125th Anniversary Star Spangled Heritage Tour down the northeast seaboard provided the children at Kurn Hattin with not only performance venues, but also an outstanding educational experience. During the week of April 10th–16th, twenty-two children and eight chaperones traveled from Westminster, Vermont to Philadelphia, Baltimore, and Washington, D.C., Gettysburg, and Hershey, Pennsylvania, New York City, New Haven, and Mystic, Connecticut. They performed 12 concerts in many exciting venues. Some of the highlighted performances included singing in front of Independence Hall, at Historic Shipyards, the Capitol, the White House, the Lincoln Memorial,

Gettysburg Park, Hershey Chapel, Lincoln Center, Yale New Haven Hospital, and Mystic Seaport. They were able to visit the Liberty Bell, Smithsonian Museums, Arlington National Cemetery, the National Zoo, tour the Capitol, tour the White House, meet many people (including Abe Lincoln in Gettysburg!) and make many new friends. “This trip has changed my life,” was the reaction expressed by many students. “I can’t believe that I was given this amazing experience.” Thank you to everyone who made this tour possible.

The 7th/8th grade track team had an especially spectacular season. Jacob Baltazar, shown with his coach Dan Barile, placed second in the 400 meter run, to help the Kurn Hattin boys track and field team finish 10th in the Connecticut Valley League Middle School Championship meet at Fall Mountain in May. His time of 1:00.07 broke the school’s record. Jacob was also part of Kurn Hattin’s 4x100 relay team, which set a new school record and placed eighth overall in 56.06 seconds. About 30 schools and 700 athletes participated. Quite the accomplishment, Jacob!



Music is a core component of a well-rounded education at Kurn Hattin. Students have music every day, join one of the choirs, and play at least one musical instrument—sometimes several! For many, mastering these instruments is the first real accomplishment of their young lives. Students also perform in a wide range of public appearances, which boosts self-confidence. In all, the band and choir entertain audiences at approximately 30 public performances a year. This year’s highlights included the Star Spangled Heritage Tour, the Kurn Hattin Jazz Invitational, the Burlington Discover Jazz Festival, Fenway Park, and a performance at the Colonial Theatre in Keene, New Hampshire as guests of the Greater Keene Pops Choir. “I think music is the universal language. For our kids, music is something they’ve not had great exposure to, but in which they experience great joy,” says Music Director Lisa Bianconi.



Years ago when Kurn Hattin had two campuses, and the girls and boys lived apart, it was difficult for siblings to see one another frequently. Now with everyone on the Westminster campus, the siblings can see their brothers and sisters often. This year we had 13 sibling groups all living on the same campus at the same time! Here are two of them...



THE *Bridge Builders*

Building bridges to the future for children in need since 1894

A Glimpse Into the Life of a Bridge Builder

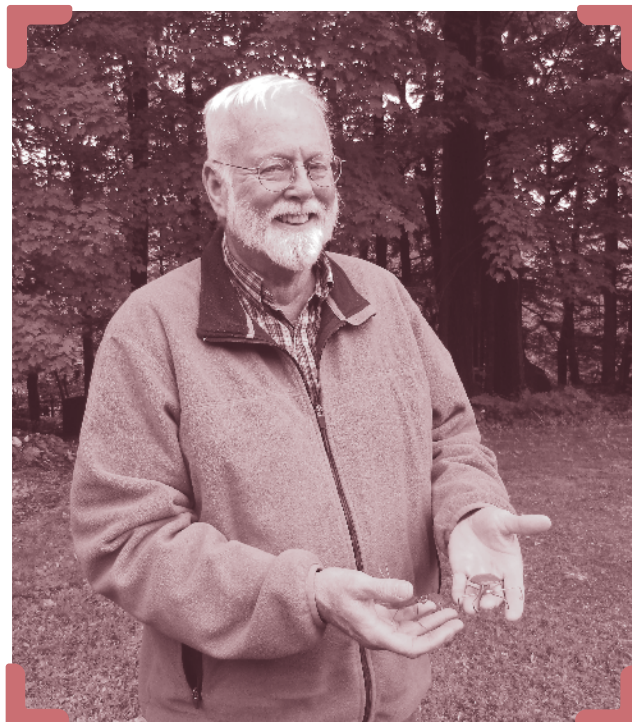
Geoff Branch was working in Vermont when he first heard of Kurn Hattin Homes. He thought it was an orphanage. It would be years before he learned that it was much, much more.

Years later, at UMass Amherst, he was studying entomology—the study of “bugs.” However, his job in Putney had given him a Class 2 license, and when he was offered a job driving truck at a local lumber company, he took it, saved his pay, and bought a house. Geoff learned many skills at his job. “I enjoyed learning. I had almost enough credits for a master’s degree, but I was broke. Luckily, I had the house.”

Eventually he took what he had learned and went to work for a friend in woodworking and millwork, then bought half of the business, building it up until they had 20 employees. After eleven years, he sold his share and bought an apartment building in Northampton, Massachusetts.

Geoff sold the apartment building during the boom years of the late 1980s and considered an early retirement. But he was only 37 years old and everyone he knew was still working. “I had no one to play with,” he laughs. So he took a course in organizational development. He also got his airplane mechanics license and restored old planes.

A friend needed a manager for a special project to take supermarkets off the electrical grid at times of high demand. So Geoff helped design, build, and install eight generating stations, providing these businesses with lower cost electricity.



“When you’ve done well, you need to do something. I wanted to do something to help kids. I was hearing the name Kurn Hattin again from people that I knew. My dental hygienist’s mother went to Kurn Hattin. A good friend’s wife works there. And then I met another graduate. He was in his late teens and running a machine at a machine museum in Vermont. He had a plan for his life and knew how he was going to get there. He really impressed me. I visited Kurn Hattin on one of their Get Acquainted Days and was very glad that I had my first Donor Advised Fund check go to Kurn Hattin.”

Now Geoff is ‘officially’ retired. “Even with some start-ups that failed, I’ve

SOCIETY NEWS:

For generations, Kurn Hattin has been blessed with friends who have endowed its work. In January 1993, the Bridge Builder Society was founded to recognize donors who make a gift (s) of \$10,000 or more to the Endowment and Board Designated Funds. These may include designated bequests, trusts, outright gifts to the endowment, naming Kurn Hattin as the beneficiary of a life insurance policy, purchasing a charitable gift annuity, as well as other deferred gifts designated by the donor for the endowment. The Bridge Builder Society also recognizes trusts established by donors to provide ongoing financial support to Kurn Hattin and gifts for current use.

Since the last issue of this newsletter, the following have been added to Kurn Hattin’s Designated Funds and Endowment Fund received July 1, 2018–June 30, 2019 (\$10,000 or more):

**Alfred Hawley
Charitable Trust**

**Berkshire Taconic
Community
Foundation/Mary
Fuqua**

**Geoff Branch,
Kate Spencer,
& Susannah Branch**

*In Memory of our dear
friend, Loretta Land*

**Leslie Ann Dickinson
& Ken Morris**

**The Estate of Charles
Edmunds (‘59)**

**William &
Paulette Gray**

*In Memory of Harold &
Dorothy Gray*

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**Mr. & Mrs.
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**Robert W. Owens, Jr.
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**The Estate of Mr.
Peter T. Stavrou (‘52)**

Barbara St. John

**The Estate of
Lawrence Thomas**

**Dr. & Mrs.
Robert E. Tortolani**

In Memory of Tom Fahner

**The Estate of
Anna Vaughn**

**Mr. & Mrs.
John Alan Watson**

**Whitney-Blake
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been incredibly lucky,” he says. “I’ve lived frugally, saved a lot, and bought stock that did well. I continue to live modestly with a couple of exceptions. I drive a Miata at high speeds at New England race tracks. It’s a lot of fun.” Geoff also ‘tinkers,’ crafting incredible ‘bugs’ out of sheet copper and wire. “It’s like I’ve gone full circle from studying to making bugs.”

He’s also gone full circle in transforming the gifts he was given into opportunities for a new generation, building a bridge between his success and theirs. Thanks, Geoff!

~ Kim Fine,
Director of the Annual Fund & Special Projects

THE BRIDGE BUILDER

by Will Allen Dromgoole

An old man, going a lone highway
Came at the evening, cold and gray,
To a chasm, vast and deep and wide,
Through which was flowing
A sullen tide.

The old man crossed
in the twilight dim—
That sullen stream
had no fears for him,
But he turned,
When he reached the other side,
And built a bridge to span the tide.

“Old man,” said a fellow pilgrim near,
“You are wasting your strength
in building here.

Your journey will end
With the ending day;
You never again must pass this way

You have crossed the chasm,
deep and wide,
Why build you a bridge at eventide?”

The builder lifted his old grey head,
“Good friend, in the path
I have come,” he said,
“There followeth after me today
A youth whose feet
must pass this way.

This chasm that has been
naught to me
To that fair-haired youth
may a pitfall be.

He, too, must cross
in the twilight dim;
Good friend, I am building
the bridge for him.”

Julie Barry BIDS ADIEU AFTER THIRTY-FOUR YEARS OF TEACHING

In 1985, Julie (Smith) Barry, fresh out of Lyndon State College, joined Kurn Hattin Homes for Children as a part-time 7th and 8th grade science teacher. English classes were added to her teaching schedule, and later she was hired as the full time 6th grade teacher. Over the years, Julie has taught grades 4 through 8, but likes teaching 4th and 5th graders the best. “They still like to play and are open to doing fun things,” explained Julie. At the end of this school year, after thirty-four years teaching, Julie Barry bid adieu to Kurn Hattin.

“I didn’t always want to be a teacher,” said Julie. It was only after volunteering in her niece’s 1st grade classroom that she started thinking about teaching. Joan Morey, her niece’s 1st grade teacher and eventually Julie’s mentor, told her she was really good with kids and later facilitated Julie’s admission into college.

However, “What you learn in college isn’t necessarily what works in the classroom. You’re taught that everyone is going to learn at the same rate and that’s not true. What I learned in college I had to adapt so that the kids were successful. That’s a strong thing for me. I want everyone to feel that they’re successful regardless of their level or ability.”

Julie’s advice to incoming teachers? “Be flexible. Don’t beat yourself up if things (class projects) don’t work, because things don’t always work when you try them. Have an open mind, it’s not all set in stone. Try different things.”

For the remainder of the year, Julie and her students made the most of their time together. Every Tuesday and Thursday they had lunch in their 4th/5th grade classroom. “That’s our special time together.”

Julie is looking forward to traveling with her husband, Chris Barry, former Executive Director of Kurn Hattin, to Ireland and parts of United States, and spending time with her children and granddaughter. Picture circa 2006: Julie wearing a brown wig for “Twins Day” with her student Karlygash.

~ Indira Singh
Development/Institutional
Advancement Support
Services Officer



VOLUNTEERS PLAY A *Vital Role*



Nancy Hamblet Lightner

Volunteers play a vital role at Kurn Hattin Homes and support our children and staff in countless ways. Whether working directly with our children, helping in a classroom, assisting with the summer program, serving as an Incorporator or Trustee, or getting involved with one of our many programs or activities, volunteers make a tremendous difference in all that we do as a community.

Each year over 100 volunteers donate their time and talents to make Kurn Hattin a warm and caring community for the children entrusted to our care. During the spring, Kurn Hattin students and staff publicly recognize all of our wonderful volunteers who have helped throughout the year during a special lunch, highlighted by a musical performance and a gift from the children.

To help us more effectively utilize this incredible resource, three dedicated individuals have stepped

forward to help Kurn Hattin more effectively manage its network of volunteers. Nancy Hamblet Lightner, Maggi Suttles, and Janet Wilson have worked tirelessly over the past few months to help streamline the volunteer structure, create and refine job descriptions, highlight new opportunities for volunteer engagement, and serve as liaisons between the Homes and its volunteers. We thank them for their tireless commitment to helping Kurn Hattin in so many different ways.

If you are interested in volunteering at Kurn Hattin, please email volunteer@kurnhattin.org and we will be in touch about how you can help.

Thank you!

~ Tom Oxholm
Director of Major Gifts



Maggi Suttles & Janet Wilson

Emerging Voices

FEATURING THE CREATIVE GIFTS OF
OUR STUDENTS PAST AND PRESENT

Every time I talk about Kurn Hattin, it is with the utmost respect and love for this one-of-a-kind place. Kurn Hattin gave me so many experiences and valuable lessons I could not have come into ownership of otherwise, and many more fond memories. My start at Kurn Hattin was my start in the core of who I am and what makes me, me. And that's music. My mom had sent my sister and me here, when I was about 11 years old and she 10. We were experiencing some financial issues that affected our home situation. We were these little mixed city kids, and I mean real city kids, straight out of Brooklyn, New York. I remember feeling extremely nervous but also strongly curious and excited for what this place and rural life had to offer us.

It wasn't always easy being so far from home all the time, but Kurn Hattin became a home away from home, and it was so cool for my sister and me to get lucky enough to experience two different worlds at different paces. I'm glad my mom found this place when she did, as it felt like optimal timing. The teachers did such an amazing job making me fall in love with learning, and as I grew intellectually they geared their curriculum to aid that expansion. They are those teachers you see in the wholesome TV shows or movies who go the extra mile for their students because they truly care. They knew the value in creating a prosperous and attentive learning environment for young minds. I learned how to play sports here and really got into them too. The first shot I ever made in basketball was for the other team! It was hilarious, I was so excited and my teammates and coach just laughed it off with me after I realized what I had done.

I could talk about so many good moments and funny stories, but the most valuable thing I took away from this place was my passion for music. Mrs. Bianconi got gears rolling in me to a machine I didn't really know existed. I remember my very first time singing here. My sister had thrown her hand in the air after Mrs. Bianconi asked all us kids in music class about doing a solo. I thought she was volunteering herself but it turned out she was volunteering my voice! She yelled, "My sister sings! She can sing! You should make her do the solo!" I looked at her with shock, as if she betrayed my secret, but man have I been ever grateful to her for forcing my hand. From that moment my soul was sold to music! I was in jazz band and played multiple instruments, the alto sax being my strongest. I sang in choir and participated in the music festivals and sang in everything. When I graduated here I did so with the

award in music and left the stage with a brand new beautiful saxophone. The amount of encouragement and complete support I received here was unlike any other. I had an entire community behind me.

I got to go to Vermont Academy for high school and continue my education and journey in music. I was part of the vocal ensemble, jazz band, auditioned and got accepted into the music district festivals with perfect scores for my alto sax and vocals. I even got into theater and performed in a musical. Senior year, I went back to New York and I took my love for music and what I'd gained here with me. My choir had been selected to compete in a competition at Disney and although we didn't win, that was just another way music opened up doors for me. In college, I chose psychology as my major and for a bit I strayed away from music, dealing with depression and other inconveniences. Then I joined the theater club and auditioned for the musical and that passion came flowing back in. It pulled me out of this dark fog I let myself get swallowed up in. Music has always helped me find my way.

Today I'm pursuing music once again, writing and creating my own songs and albums with friends and on my own. I've taught myself to play piano and the ukulele, I even decided to get a vocal coach for a little while to help me develop my voice, since I believe there's always room for improvement. I'm doing this all while juggling work and my psych degree and whatever life throws at me. I know no matter how far down the road I get, I'm always going to look back and remember where everything really started for me, and that was right here, at Kurn Hattin Homes.

~ Aaliyah Olmo, Class of 2010



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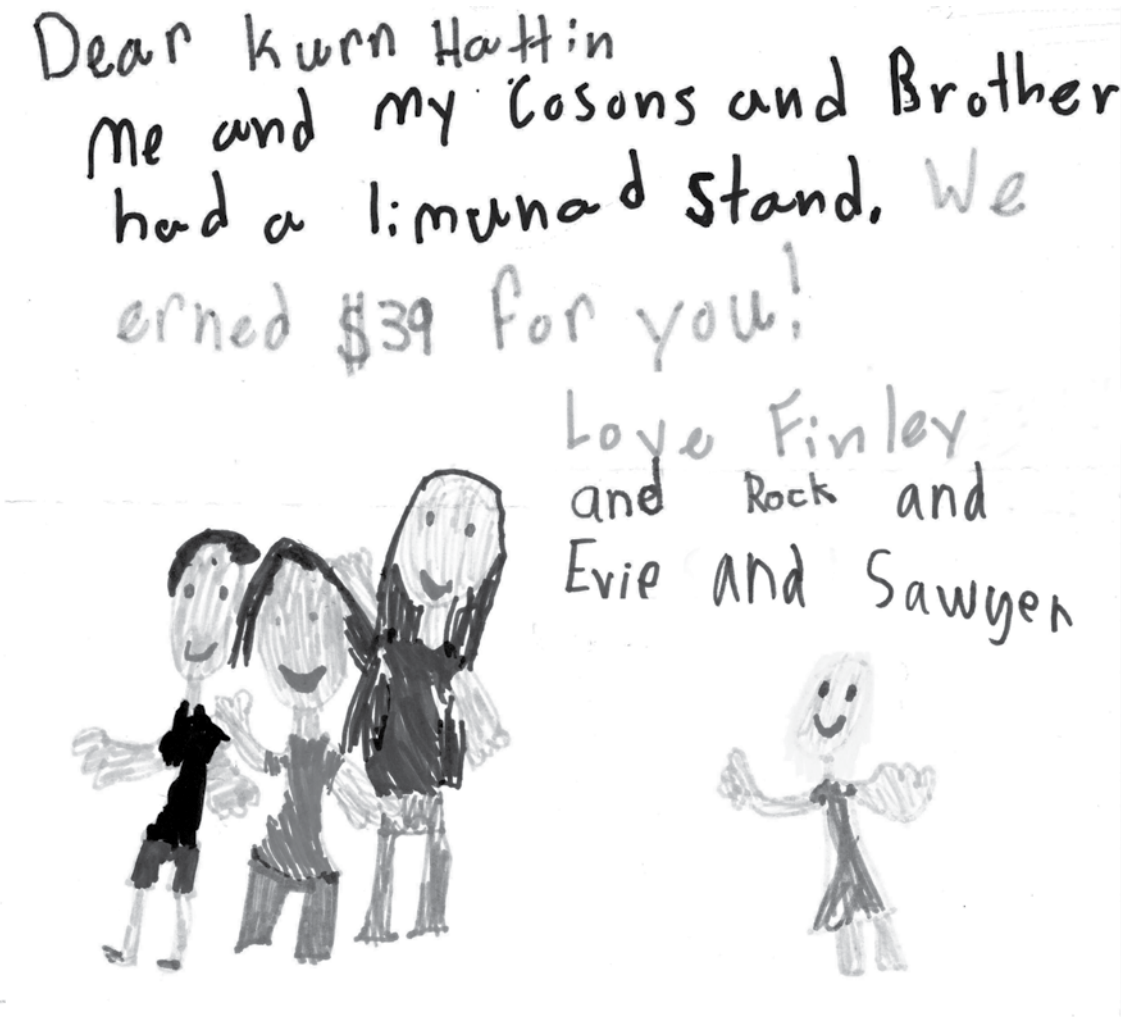
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Thank You FOR MAKING WHAT WE DO POSSIBLE

Kurn Hattin Homes for Children relies on your support. Ninety-five percent of Kurn Hattin's revenue comes from charitable donations. Our annual fund goal this fiscal year (July 1, 2019 - June 30, 2020)—which provides programs, food, clothing, and housing—is \$900,000. This is a significant fundraising challenge, but with your support we can do it. Every gift makes a difference, and there are many ways to give, as you can see below. Your generosity to Kurn Hattin makes the transformation of children and their families possible.

Consider becoming a sustaining donor. You can do so through Pay Pal or our website kurnhattin.org/donate or call or email Tracy Berns at (802) 721-6912 or tberns@kurnhattin.org.



Contact Kim Fine at (802) 721-6914 or kfine@kurnhattin.org if you would like to discuss including Kurn Hattin in your will. Sample language to use to include Kurn Hattin in your will is posted on our website. www.kurnhattin.org.
Thank you.

MemorialGIFTS

*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 January 15, 2019 and July 8, 2019.*

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Naomi Risch
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Taylor & Connor Grant-Knight

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IN MEMORY OF MY HUSBAND, ERNEST WILSON

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*alumnus/na

**honorary alumnus/alumna

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A gift to the Homes may also honor a memorable occasion in someone’s life. A wedding anniversary, arrival of a new baby, a birthday, a promotion or retirement—all offer an opportunity to commemorate those who have touched the lives of others. Kurn Hattin will be pleased to notify the person (s) about your kind gesture at your request.

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*alumnus/na

**honorary alumnus/alumna

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FOR CHILDREN

Founded and incorporated in 1894

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