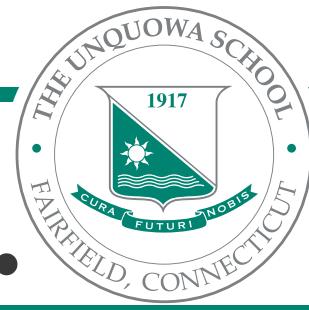


About U.S.



A Publishing Tradition
of The Unquowa School

A Message From the Head of School

Children and young adults whose lives revolve around the culture and rhythm of school all know the feeling of promise that August sparks. Even the most spirited champion of lazy summer life wakes up one morning in August with the strange yearning for productivity. The desire to acquire and organize school supplies, pick out a new backpack, or make fresh promises about diligence and goals is hard to escape in late August.

Of course, adults who have made school our life's work have that same mysterious rhythm, and at some point in the summer it signals a click from restoration to aspiration. I was still in Maine when my summer "click" occurred. I'd read an article about the portrait painter Chuck Close in which writer Wil S. Hylton describes Close "not merely as a painter of enormous faces but as someone engaged in thinking about the fragile boundary between identity and perception." How, I wondered, do we manage our own perceptions to allow children to build their unique identities, not become our own perceptions of them?

"The fragile boundary between identity and perception." The line rang in my head through kayak rides and rounds of golf. Like a loose Lego piece, it nagged me on long walks and begged to be connected — until last week when I read several advance articles by Dr. Alison Gopnik for her new book, *The Gardener and the Carpenter: What the New Science of Child Development Tells Us About the Relationship Between Parents and Children*. Much of Gopnik's recent work has focused on the remarkable way that young children's brains are designed to learn from observation and play, and how the advent of formal education and the fairly recent concept of "parenting" has stifled that design's potential. Gopnik's book explores research which documents that, while children are naturally driven to imitate, they do not do so mindlessly; they take notes, they use play as experimentation and they modify their play - which is in fact their work - based on results. It is the human brain's

crucial ability to observe, imitate and improve upon an action that has been the key to our species' evolutionary success.

The research Gopnik explores and its message for both parents and educators is an injunction against seeing children as products whose end we perceive and mold and an invitation to see children as a gardener would - to be guided, nurtured and encouraged. Her observations speak beautifully to "the fragile boundary between

identity and perception."

New research tells us scientifically what most preschool teachers have always known intuitively. If we want to encourage learning, innovation and creativity, as parents we should love our young children, take care of them, talk to them, let them play and let them watch what we do as we go about our everyday lives. In schools, as children grow older and learning becomes

more complex, educators should protect the notion of authentic wondering in our guidance and discourse with students. We are not only supporting and protecting the development of each child's individual identity, we are also protecting the evolving future of the elegantly designed human species.

Encouraging creativity, innovation and critical thinking in our students was the impetus behind building the Greenberg Gator Garage, our school's makerspace, last summer. It is what pushed us to redesign the classroom environment of our humanities wing and many other classrooms this summer to more clearly reflect and support teaching that is based on collaboration, authentic wondering, and learning that allows every student to discover their own identity.

The spark of August burns brightly and this fall could not be anticipated more as we at Unquowa continue to think about the fragile boundary between identity and perception in the classroom, always working to teach more as gardeners than carpenters.

Sharon Lauer, Head of School



Raphael puts her own spin on the work of artist Andy Goldsworthy.

Summer on the Farm



Unquowa Farm Camp is an experience like no other! Our older campers spent their days outdoors planting and harvesting vegetables while surrounded by animals on the farm. Sweet Peas, our younger campers, learned about farming on a smaller scale by helping to maintain our curricular gardens here at the school.

To deepen campers' understanding of sustainable agriculture they worked with our school chefs to make their own lunches using produce from the farm and gardens. Some tasty lunches included homemade pizza and kale Caesar salad. Campers of all ages learned more about the natural world through environmental science classes, art projects and field experiences for mountain hikes and to explore local ponds. Our Camp Director, Faith Barbuto, is already working on exciting plans for next summer — look for online registration next February and hurry; spots fill up fast!

Inventors at Work

This summer we hosted two new week-long camps in the Gator Garage for students interested in tinkering, inventing and problem-solving. Led by Unquowa faculty members, students worked on group projects like creating their own eco-tourist parks, experimenting with electronics and nature inspired design with Cricobots as well as creating new inventions from recycled consumables. Each project challenged our inventors to think creatively and to work collaboratively...all while learning the value of perseverance and patience! What a great way to end an exciting first year in Unquowa's new makerspace, the *Greenberg Gator Garage!*



Alums at Camp

It was wonderful to have some of our young alumni at school this summer to help with our camps. Their energy and enthusiasm were contagious! Thank you!



New Faces at Unquowa this Fall



Joanne Karow
Director of Admissions
Ms. Karow joined us in July and has twelve years experience in independent school administration including admissions, marketing and community relations. Joanne has a BA from Long Island University and a master's in clinical psychology from the State University of NY.



Karen Engelke
Grade 2 Teacher
Mrs. Engelke comes to us after teaching second grade for seven years at the International School in Hamburg, Germany. Karen has also taught at several area schools including Rippowam-Cisqua in Bedford, NY. She is a graduate of Bard College and has a master's in early childhood education from Bank Street College of Education.



Jacqui Mudre
Advancement Assistant
Mrs. Mudre has been at Unquowa since June and joins us from New Beginnings Family Academy where she was an Executive Assistant for eight years. She studied visual communications at the Sydney College of Arts in Australia.



Vincent O'Hara
Humanities Teacher
Mr. O'Hara has been teaching middle school writing at Eagle Hill Southport for the last eight years. He has both an undergraduate and master's degree in school psychology from Fairfield University. In addition to teaching, he will be joining our coaching staff.



George Seferidis
Humanities Teacher
Mr. Seferidis has been an eighth grade teacher and department chair at East Ridge Middle School for six years and was the editor of their nationally acclaimed student literature publication. He has a BA in English and a BA in religion from Syracuse University and an MAT from Sacred Heart University.



Betsy Young
PreK Lunch Bunch
Prior to coming to Unquowa, Mrs. Young taught preschool at the Anglo-American School in Sofia, Bulgaria; first and second grade at St. David's School and preschool at Elizabeth Seton, both in NYC. Betsy is a graduate of Bucknell University and received her M.Ed from the University of Virginia.

Summer of Music



Hosting Chamber Music Central's Summer Festival has become a tradition at Unquowa. For five weeks young musicians worked together to perfect their assigned chamber pieces and performed in concerts at the end of each session — how lucky for us to have the halls filled with wonderful music!

Save the Dates

Founders' Day
Saturday, October 15, 12:00-3:00

Annual Meeting & Screening
Most Likely to Succeed
Tuesday, November 15, 6:30 p.m.

Winterfest
Wednesday, December 14, 1:30
Thursday, December 15, 7:00



THE UNQUOWA SCHOOL

981 Stratfield Road, Fairfield, CT 06825-1697

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

A Journey of History, Art and Culture

It's safe to say that we had no idea what we were really in for when we landed in Oaxaca, Mexico. When we applied for the Virginia Birdsall Grant last spring, one of our main goals was to become acquainted with numerous artisan villages. In particular, we wanted to meet Josefina Aguilar, a renowned ceramic folk artist, whose techniques Mrs. Ponden has been imparting to her art classes for over a decade.

We spent the next four days visiting distinct villages and learning about their respective art processes and products including barro negro (black clay) ceramics, woodcarving, filigree pottery, weaving and printmaking. And of course, we found our way to the home of Josefina Aguilar in Ocotlán where we enjoyed meeting and talking with her and her son Demetrio. Not even blindness

brought on by diabetes has been able to stop Josefina from creating the ceramic muñecas (dolls) that she loves.

What started as a fairly simple idea to go meet Josefina Aguilar, quickly blossomed into a far more profound, collaborative experience than either one of us could have ever imagined. We are grateful to Unquowa for helping us to live out this unconventional professional development and we are excited to share our experiences with our students and colleagues.

For more details and photos from our amazing trip, please see our blog post in the Around Campus section of www.unquowa.org



Take-A-Look at Unquowa

Our Admissions Department is happy to host Take-A-Look Days for small groups of prospective parents to visit and learn more about Unquowa. There is ample time to ask questions, and to get a sense of the school's atmosphere while classes are in session.

Tours begin at 9:00 and last about an hour and a half. Our fall schedule:

- Thursday, September 22
- Thursday, October 6
- Tuesday, October 18
- Thursday, October 27
- Thursday, November 3
- Tuesday, November 8
- Thursday, November 17
- Thursday, December 8
- Tuesday, December 13

*Katie Brenna, Spanish Teacher
Krissy Ponden, Art Teacher*