



Congratulations!



Connecticut Teacher of the Year

The **Connecticut Teacher of the Year** is Kristi Luetjen, kindergarten teacher at Whiting Lane School. At the press conference held at her school on Wednesday, October 21, 2009, Kristi accepted the honor with her family, friends, colleagues, students and invited guests. She is an eight-year veteran teacher and has shown her talents in the classroom with students. She will represent Connecticut for the 'National Teacher of the Year' and will be invited to visit the White House in the spring.

Kristi is a native of Connecticut, growing up in Newington. She was influenced by her family, especially by an aunt who is also a teacher. Kristi began her career in 2000 at Whiting Lane as a teacher assistant and continued her journey to become an elementary teacher and a special education teacher. In 2007-2008 her leadership integrated children with special needs into general classrooms. She incorporated a weekly yoga program for kindergarten students. She also had a challenging year personally but was supported by her colleagues and students to complete the year. As a cancer survivor she also volunteers at Hartford Hospital to help other young women who have been diagnosed with cancer. Kristi realizes that the most important thing in life is that we must take care of each other. A well deserved honor goes to Kristi Luetjen!



Bulletin boards at Whiting Lane School honoring Kristi

SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST:

YOUR 2009-2010 OFFICERS:

President: David Dippolino

Executive Vice

President:

Theresa McKeown

Administrative Vice

President:

Margo Walerysiak

Treasurer:

Tom Hine

Visit the website at

www.whea.org

Editor: Joyce Bogdan,

PR Chair

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

<i>CT Teacher of the Year</i>	1
<i>New Teachers Social</i>	2
<i>'WHEA World' Purpose</i>	
<i>Leading Students</i>	3
<i>Falconer Visits Sedgwick</i>	
<i>Unified Theatre Production</i>	4
<i>Conservation Challenge</i>	
<i>Body Speak</i>	
<i>Helping Others</i>	5
<i>Joint ESOL Experience</i>	6
<i>Kudos go to:</i>	
<i>Your Credit Union</i>	7-9
<i>Quick Tips</i>	
<i>Current Issues/Local News</i>	
<i>Award & Accomplishment Form</i>	

WHEA New Teachers Social

The West Hartford Education Association (WHEA) had a social for new teachers on October 8, 2009 at Murphy and Scarletti's in Farmington. The purpose was to welcome new teachers, and their mentors to the WHEA and to celebrate that "the first month is over." They were sharing the time with executive board members and building reps. The WHEA will continue to support all teachers throughout the year.



President David Dippolino greeting Lisa Besman a new music teacher at Norfeldt.



Seated is new teacher Michael Wilkosz, Hall technology education teacher. Standing from left Tom Hine, WHEA Treasurer; Exec. V.P. Theresa McKeown; Adm. V.P. Margo Walerysiak

'WHEA World' Purpose

The second edition of the West Hartford Education Association's 'WHEA World' is here! The WHEA has been working for the advancement of West Hartford's public school teachers, children and schools since 1928.

The purpose of our 'WHEA World' is to keep members informed with the latest news and highlight achievements of our colleagues. The 'WHEA World' will be able to showcase, highlight and share the accomplishments of the top notch teachers of West Hartford.

Please pass along information about awards, and achievements that you and your colleagues have received so that we can publish them in upcoming newsletters. Please e-mail or complete the "Award and Achievement Form" and send the information to the PR chair at wheaoffice@gmail.com. The form can be found on the WHEA website at www.whea.org. Let's share our wonderful accomplishments with our colleagues!

Wheat Field with Crows

on the painting by Vincent van Gogh
Ginny Lowe Connors

From fields lush with wheat
they rise up, those old black
sorrows, crying out my name,
taking pleasure in it too. Like the stiff
straw men abandoned there,
coming unhinged, they flap
and stir the chaff to storms
of golden dust. What crooked rut
is this that wanders, a little green,
into the grain toward
the squawking of crows?
Even when I believe I've left
the world's restless errands behind,
an agitation follows me.
In this incandescent world
the sky comes roiling closer,
bearing again its difficult night.

Leading Students to Help Others

The 44 music teachers from across the sixteen West Hartford schools implemented “Music for the Heart, Food for the Soul” program with the lead of Haig Shahverdian, supervisor of the Fine and Performing Arts. This program collects non-perishable food items for the local Food Bank. Franklin Gallo and Joseph Marino, choir directors at Sedgwick and Conard respectively, began a friendly competition last year which continues this year. The count of items collected continues across schools with a race to collect the most for the local food bank.



Jennifer Tauro headed ‘Feed the Children’ Through “Kids Stuff U.S.A” with the help of the teachers on team 8-1: Floyd Campbell, Trevor Coon, Traci Mayette, Andrew Hook and Brian Putkonen. They spearheaded their eighth grade team students to help with this cause.

Sedgwick team 7-2 teachers, Sue Henneberry, Tom Hine, Jas Singh, Trish Hartunian, Sharon Eddy and David Simon encouraged their seventh grade students to participate in the “Heifer Foundation.” The program supports families in poverty stricken countries by supplying livestock and agricultural training. This foundation is a “nonprofit whose mission is to end hunger and poverty and care for the Earth.”

Falconer Visits Sedgwick



An Apalomado falcon perched in front of a poster of Falconer Jonathan Wood from Roxbury, N.Y. This falcon, now extinct in the wild in the U.S., is in the process of a reintroduction program in Texas.

On Friday, October 16, 2009 Sedgwick students were offered a very special program about birds of prey and falconry. Falconer Jonathan Wood brought about twenty birds of prey to use to teach students about the importance of these predators in Connecticut’s food web. Several of the birds flew in the gym as students learned about different kinds of raptors, their ecological role in the environment and their historic role in partnering with man to hunt. As a boy Jonathan Wood was inspired by the book *My Side of the Mountain* by Jean Craighead George and he pursued this field of study. Thank you goes to Sarah Faulkner, sixth grade science teacher who brought this program to the school with the help of the Foundation for West Hartford Public Schools and the Sedgwick PTO.



Unified Theatre Production

On November 20th the Unified Theatre Production of “Twisted Tales,” was held in the Sedgwick auditorium. The sixty-three students created, directed and produced a presentation of their favorite childhood stories “to experience a new twist on many of our favorite books” done with “humor and fun.” Under the direction of Melissa Lotstein, 6th grade music teacher, Denise Brezinski, Karen Grant, and Heather Pelkey, special needs teacher assistants, the students worked and enjoyed their success. “The mission of Unified Theatre is to create a theatrical production equally featuring the talents of individuals with and without special needs.”

Energy Conservation Challenge

The November 2009 Conservation Challenge resulted in all schools achieving the goal of reducing electricity consumption by 5% more than last year. Wolcott Elementary School ended as the top winner with a reduction in energy use by 32% compared to last November. Runner ups were from the elementary schools Norfeldt and Webster Hill. The top middle school was Sedgwick Middle and the top high school was Hall High. “The West Hartford Public Schools reduced their forecasted electricity consumption by 83,598 kilowatt hours (kWh) or 9.77% for a savings of \$14,211.66.” For more information see www.whps.org. Town of West Hartford buildings joined the challenge this year and also reduced their energy consumption. Great job to all of the employees of the West Hartford Public Schools and the Town of West Hartford for continuing to save energy.

Body Speak

Susan Gudat, seventh grade art teacher at Sedgwick, held her solo exhibition “Body Speak, An Inside Look On Outsider Experiences.” The opening reception was held at MAC 650, an art space in Middletown on December 4th. From Susan’s blog, “Currently I am working on a series titled "BODY SPEAK". I am observing the body language between groups of people I do not know, photographing and documenting what I find interesting, then painting from these images. Within each work I find myself becoming attached to the people I am painting. Not knowing anything about them, it is my own suppositions that lead me to what is really taking place in the scenes I paint.”



Helping Others

'Helping Hands'

'Helping Hands' is a program that supports Sedgwick families with gifts during the holiday season. This program is organized by the social workers at Sedgwick, Christine Welch-Meier and Renée Kleinman. The program has been met with great success thanks to the generous donations and support by the Sedgwick staff and families. If you are interested in this program, please contact either Christine or Renee.



'Coats, Hats + Scarves Game'

Conard hosted the '3rd annual Chieftains' Basketball clinic for girls and boys in grades 2 through 8.' The ticket to enter was a lightly used winter coat, hat or scarf. This allowed the students to participate in a clinic with Coach John Benyei, his staff and players. The goal of the program is "to have fun, teach fundamentals and encourage young players to continue on a path of personal growth and community support." The event was held at Conard on November 16th from 6:30 pm until 8 pm.



'Annual Red Wagon Food Drive'

For 15 years Morley School has collected food for their 'Red Wagon Food Drive.' Dawn O'Connor and Sue Staffaroni, are two second-grade teachers at Morley teachers who helped coordinate the collection of food for the West Hartford Food Pantry. Eighty one wagons filled with 5,000 donated food items were pulled by the Kindergarten, first and second graders to Town Hall. Assisting to assure the safe street crossings were the WHPD and WHFD. The entire Morley community came together for this service project and does so every year. Morley's principal, Dr. Ellen Stokoe, and the other K, 1 and 2 teachers involved are: Lori Willin, Deb Abraham, Jody Monroe, Barbara Flores, Katie Burt, Christine Peach, Megan Wares, and Christine Vannie. The wagon loads were brought to the Town Hall on November 18, in time for Thanksgiving.



Joint ESOL Middle School Experience



The exterior of Mark Twain and Harriet Beecher Stowe's houses

On Friday, October 23, 2009, the English for Speakers of Other Language (ESOL) students from the three West Hartford Middle Schools visited Nook Farm in Hartford, CT. As part of the Mr. and Mrs. David Dupree Grant awarded by the Foundation for West Hartford Public Schools, the ESOL students from Bristow, King Philip and Sedgwick Middle Schools visited the former homes of Mark Twain and Harriet Beecher Stowe. They also participated in a program about these two famous authors that explained how they helped to bring about social changes in 19th century America. The students will continue to study the lives of the authors and read some of their literature during the year. Ms. Bogdan, Sedgwick ESOL teacher said, "The trip was a wonderful experience for the ESOL students because most of the students are new to the U.S. and it brings American history to life. It was also very special to be able to bring the three middle schools together to share in this program and unit of study. We enjoyed the day and the students will continue to share information between the three schools." A special thank you also goes to Johannah Kosienski, King Philip ESOL teacher, and Libba Oliver, Bristow ESOL teacher, as well as Shannon McNeice, Sedgwick media specialist. The trip also included ESOL parents and a special visit by Mrs. Dougie Trumble, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. David Dupree.

Kudos go to:

Ginny Connors, English Teacher at Sedgwick, has won two recent poetry prizes. She won second prize in Perigee's 2009 Poetry Contest with the poem titled "Sweet Molasses." You can see her winning poem at www.perigee-art.com. In June 2009 she also won first prize in the National Federation of State Poetry Societies (NFSPS) "Mothers and Daughters" award for a poem called "Mother in the Month of May." Ginny states that, "One of the most important ways I've found to nurture spiritual vitality is the reading and writing of poetry. Publishing it and winning prizes for my poetry is a very nice validation but that's not what it's all about. I continue to be amazed by the power of words to translate the human experience, to connect the interior of one individual to the lives, thoughts and feelings of others."

Ginny has also written a collection of poetry, [Barbarians in the Kitchen](#) and edited three books [Essential Love](#), [To Love One Another](#) and [Proposing on the Brooklyn Bridge](#). These can be found through amazon.com. Her work also appears in many other anthologies and journals.

Your Credit Union

Franklin Trust Federal Credit Union



MicroSoft ClipArt



All West Hartford Public Schools staff, employees, volunteers, and students are eligible for membership in Franklin Trust Federal Credit Union. The credit union offers a wide variety of products and services, including savings accounts, checking accounts, loans, mortgages, credit cards, debit cards, direct deposit, and on-line banking. In addition, they are part of a network of over 30,000 surcharge-free ATMs nationwide.

Franklin Trust was founded as a teachers credit union in 1934. Now the fourth oldest federal credit union in the country, they are celebrating their 75th anniversary this year.

The credit union's West Hartford office is located at 927 Farmington Avenue, near Blue Back Square. Their Main Office is at 632 Franklin Avenue in Hartford. For more information, including a form that allows you to sign up through the mail, call Franklin Trust at (860) 296-4379, ext. 203. They can be found on the web at www.franklintrust.org, as well as on Facebook and MySpace.

"We did not change as we grew older; we just became more clearly ourselves."



Lynn Hall

Quick Tips

- Check out upcoming events, school reps., e-mail addresses for the executive board members at www.whea.org.
- Attend your Building Rep's monthly 10 minute meetings. Stay informed!
- Check out the home mailings from NEA & CEA. If you are not receiving them contact your building rep. Check out the websites at www.nea.org and www.cea.org
- Stay informed with school policies and information by visiting www.whps.org.
- Read 'WHEA World' at www.whea.org. To add your news please complete the 'Award and Accomplishment' form on page 9 and e-mail the information to wheaoffice@gmail.com Watch for your news in upcoming editions.
- Find out who received grants from the Foundation for West Hartford Public Schools at www.fwhps.org. Plan ahead and think of grant ideas to submit this school year.
- Questions, concerns? talk to your building rep.

Current Issues



The December-January CEA Advisor led off with a story “Don’t tax teacher health plans” with commentary from Phil Apruzzese, CEA President and John P. Yrchik, Executive Director. They expressed their distress about the provisions of the health-care reform bill currently before the U.S. Senate. The issue is an excise tax on high-cost health plans. The effects could be that teachers in Connecticut would be forced into inferior health insurance plans. Please sign the petition in your school building and let our congressional representatives know that we are opposed to the excise tax on health care benefits. As this issue is on the top of the list for this session in Congress be sure to continue to watch the latest news. Check the websites at www.cea.org and www.nea.org for updated information on this and other important issues.

Local News



You can access your local, state and national elected officials on the West Hartford Public Library website at www.westhartfordlibrary.org. On the website click on Town of West Hartford Links on the left column, then click on Local Elected Officials. The list includes the elected officials’ position, their name, address, phone number and e-mail address. You can log onto the website for further information.

At the West Hartford’s Board of Education meeting on November 17th there was discussion about the \$25.00 activity fee for students participating in clubs. This applies to the middle and high school levels. It affects less than half of the clubs because the fee was set up to offset the stipend clubs and activities. Students paid a one-time per year fee for as many clubs as they wanted to join.

Award and Accomplishment Form

Date:

Name(s):

School(s):

Subject/Area:

Grade level(s):

Name of the Award or Accomplishment:

Description:

When and where was this received?

Why and how did you receive this honor?

Awarded by whom?

A quoted statement from you:

Attach a photo.

Congratulations on your achievement!

Please e-mail this form to WHEA at wheaooffice@gmail.com. If you have any questions or suggestions, please call me at 860-463-2547.

Joyce Bogdan
PR Chair