

Public Purpose: *Recipe for Change*

Food, Resources, Education, Sustainability, Humanity (F.R.E.S.H.)

by Lynn Sullivan

Service. Transformative learning. Reciprocal partnership. Citizenship. The common good. *Not for Self, but for Service.* These concepts are at the core of RCDS's Public Purpose initiative, now in its second full year of implementation. Public purpose is rapidly becoming a strong fiber in the RCDS educational fabric, as students, faculty and staff, parents, alumni, and our community partners all actively contribute to and benefit from this important work.

The 2012-2013 academic year has been dedicated to a school-wide focus on a "Recipe for Change" with the overarching theme of F.R.E.S.H. - Food, Resources, Education, Sustainability, and Humanity. Faculty and staff developed the F.R.E.S.H. acronym in April 2012 in recognition of their desire to expand opportunities for curricular and programmatic ties to address a mounting humanitarian crisis.

In the pages that follow, you will find examples of the growth of RCDS's thriving public purpose initiative, including the development of a service-learning strand in the curriculum, faculty and staff professional development, student involvement, outreach programs, and special events.

Upper schoolers helped clear Vegetable beds at Stone Barns in Pocantico Hills.



Public Purpose Mission Statement

Since 1869, Rye Country Day School's motto "Not for Self, But for Service" has been integral to the culture of the School. The Rye Country Day School philosophy states, "A superior education embraces the concept that to educate is to do more than to teach." Through service learning, we will provide transformative educational opportunities that prepare our students to be responsible citizens with an ethic of service and empathy for our shared human experience. We believe that meaningful and mutually beneficial partnerships emanate from a curriculum enhanced by community engagement. Rye Country Day School's sustained commitment to making a positive impact on the community and contributing to the common good defines our public purpose.

Service Learning Takes Root Across the Divisions at RCDS

One of the most critical aspects of our public purpose initiative is the development of a cross-curricular, service-learning strand that spans the three divisions. Our approach to service learning affords teachers the opportunity to integrate community and global themes into their curriculum. At its core, service learning is *learning*—typical academic objectives, plus *service*—practice in developing sustainable solutions to real-world problems. Through service learning, students remain connected to service themes over an extended period of time, in the same way that they learn new academic ideas and hone skills in the classroom over time. Students engaged in service learning strengthen their competencies within core classroom

goals and objectives. They are encouraged to use their individual talents in collaborative settings to tackle multifaceted problems and projects. They also engage in sophisticated dialogue, discourse, and discovery, resulting in questioning, re-evaluating, affirming, achieving. By the end of a service-learning unit, students have not only learned academic skills, but also have experienced empathy for others and achieved valued and attainable outcomes. And service-learning units are as unique and diverse as the teachers and students that craft and explore them.

**A sampling of the service-learning units across the disciplines and divisions at RCDS.
Many tie into the 2012-2013 F.R.E.S.H. theme.**

Grade Level or Course	Unit Description
Grade 1	In their study of the positive impact of recycling on the environment, students compose a persuasive letter to a toy company, sharing their new learning about the overuse of packing material in the company's products. Students have received responses to their letters from toy companies, further solidifying the importance of individual voice in environmental advocacy.
Grade 2	While learning about the flora and fauna of the Long Island Sound, students create a calendar featuring their drawings of the Sound and a one-line public service announcement, reminding others to keep our resources clean so that the inhabitants of the Sound can be safe. Students write to a local printing company, asking it to donate the cost of printing the calendars so that students can sell them to benefit Sound conservation. While making others aware of the importance of protecting our natural resources, students learn the value of ambassadorship and raise funds for Sound Waters, an organization dedicated to protecting the Long Island Sound through education.
Grade 3	Science students visit the Blind Brook Stream to do research on the macroinvertebrates that live there and learn about stream ecosystems and taking care of the watershed. Based on their findings, the class reports to the City Manager's office on the health of the stream, suggesting ideas to keep the stream clean. Students are now thinking about ways to make their ideas available to the general public, possibly through permanent signage near the stream. Students also will return to the stream on a regular basis to do clean up.
Grade 4	With the support of their homeroom teachers, the fourth graders learn about financial literacy through a classroom economy that brings to life such topics as salary, earnings, interest, and bank accounts. Students earn money for their classroom jobs, and they learn to divide their money into three different accounts: spending, savings, and sharing (public purpose) account. At the end of a six-day rotation, the students eagerly await "Pay Day," at which time they are paid for their jobs and earn a ten percent interest on their savings account—a rate that is easy to calculate. In addition, the students are required to pay rent on their desks, as well as any "fines" they may have accrued during the rotation, such as for a messy desk or a forgotten homework. The "sharing" account is set aside to help the community. This year, in conjunction with the CAN-DO drive, students pulled together all of their sharing accounts (as well as some money out of spending accounts, if a child so wished), and asked Mr. Nelson and Mrs. Walsh to match the classroom money with real money, which they did. The funds were donated to the Carver Center Food Pantry, on behalf of the fourth grade classes, to buy the perishable foods that the pantry needs.

A sampling of the service-learning units across the disciplines and divisions at RCDS.

Grade 5	<p>In keeping with the public purpose theme of food, the fifth grade has embarked on an interdisciplinary project on water. In each academic class and advisory group, students are working toward a deep understanding of the importance of water, its access, its role in food production, and its conservation. Students read two novels, as well as several non-fiction articles and picture books, on the topic.</p> <p>Subsequently, each child creates a colorful mini-poster on water conservation that is placed on campus where water is used. They are also composing persuasive letters to the RCDS administration, requesting financial support for the purchase and installation of four glass/bottle fillers. These will be retrofitted on existing water fountains so the RCDS community will avoid wasting water and students will be encouraged to carry reusable water bottles. In order to learn more about the history, culture, and technology of food production, fifth graders enthusiastically explore the exhibit, "Our Global Kitchen," at the Museum of Natural History on February 20. Highlights included investigating the surprising connection between smell and taste in the "jellybean" experiment, seeing the enormous amount of food that Olympic swimmer Michael Phelps eats while in training, and discovering the exotic, protein-rich food that various cultures enjoy. In addition, fifth graders visited the Hall of Planet Earth, where they actually touched the Willamette Meteorite, similar in size to that which recently fell in Russia. In keeping with the theme of water, students watched a video that explained the connection between groundwater recharge and the severe droughts that have plagued the southern United States.</p>
Grade 6 Social Studies	<p>Students explore Peter Menzel's Hungry Planet photo essay, comprising 12 posters of families in Bhutan, Chad, China, Ecuador, Germany, Guatemala, India, Japan, Kuwait, Mali, Mexico, and the United States, in their homes with a week's worth of food displayed around them. Students examine the photographs and the country facts (life expectancy, obesity rate) and family information (food sources, cooking methods) provided on each poster. They use skills such as critical thinking, visual analysis, making inferences, compare and contrast, and making generalizations when answering questions about the posters. This project will lead to the creation of public service announcements by students to be shared with the RCDS community and beyond in an effort to educate others about what students learned while they studied the Hungry Planet.</p>
Grade 7 Art	<p>Students engage in an exploration of the hidden beauty of fruits and vegetables through the printmaking process of stamping. Learning that a single piece of fruit can be used to make infinite images, they play with overlapping colors to create new colors. The result of printing with fruits and vegetables accentuates often-overlooked details. Since students are already exploring infinite images and the intersection of color, incorporating food into the overall unit contribute to students' connection to the school-wide F.R.E.S.H. focus.</p>

A sampling of the service-learning units across the disciplines and divisions at RCDS.

Grade 8	During the dedicated 8 th Grade Community Service days, students learn about the permaculture process of gardening, a way of designing agricultural ecosystems that mimic natural ecosystems. Students learn and work at Our New Way Garden in West Harrison, NY. The garden, situated on a corporate landscape, donates its produce to the Carver Center Food Pantry.
AP Biology	During the unit on soil ecology, students make a weed guide (weed fact sheets) for Our New Way Garden and examine the soil samples from the garden, students identify weeds, observe their root systems, and sketch them in their lab books. Such hands-on application of skills deriving from the classroom and partnering with community organizations that exist for the advancement of the greater good enhances students' learning and introduces them to new venues for service opportunities.
Physics	The Sustainable Technology Physics Project aims to attempt a real-world application of students' learning by identifying innovative physics-related technologies that would immediately improve the lives of disadvantaged people in developing countries. With the guidance of their teacher, students create a mission statement and first-year goals. They then create a task list with anticipated completion dates and form committees for each task. In groups, students also develop criteria for selecting devices by doing research on the physics associated with the devices, correlating devices with NGOs/manufacturers, gauging pricing and availability, and field testing the devices. Critical to the process is researching and matching the needs of the target population, as well as all aspects of fundraising. When the devices are delivered and in use, students gather feedback and assess the project, and report in order to replicate the process the following year.
US Choir	The U.S. Choir continues its partnership, now in its third year, with the Highbridge Voices Chamber Choir. Highbridge Voices provides an intensive music after-school program for over 100 children in the Bronx. Over the course of several months, RCDS and Highbridge join their musical forces to present a combined concert. Music students rehearse in both choirs' respective spaces, perhaps the most symbolic representation of true partnership. In addition to great artistic merit in and of itself, the project serves as an opportunity for children and communities from diverse backgrounds to come together to learn about each other and from each other in song.

In Good Company: RCDS Joins the National Network of Schools in Partnership

In February, 2013, RCDS became a founding member of the National Network of Schools in Partnership (NNSP), which was launched at the National Association of Independent Schools' National Conference in Philadelphia. Specifically designed to support schools and community programs engaged in high-impact public-private partnerships, NNSP brings together schools (public, private, and charter), educational access and enrichment programs, and policy and education reform groups to improve equity in educational opportunities. RCDS and the 50 other founding members will serve as models of best practice for schools and organizations beginning to engage in public-private partnerships, as well as have access to expertise in scaling our own innovative public purpose programs. Among the founding members are Punahou School (Hawaii), Lakeside School (Washington), Chicago Latin School, Sage Hill School (California), Milton Academy (Massachusetts), and Greenhill School (Texas), in addition to NAIS and the National Coalition of Girls' Schools. RCDS is the first member of the network from New York State.

During their study of the gardening process, eighth graders created and tended a vegetable garden on campus at 11 Grandview Ave.



Service Learning in the Spotlight: Senior Service Seminar and Senior Term

As a culminating part of their RCDS education, all seniors participate in the newly revised Senior Service Seminar and Senior Term, formerly known as June Term. During the second semester of the senior year, students are asked to develop a public purpose project that combines their personal interests and talents with community needs. Seniors embark on an inventory of skills and interests, match the findings of these studies to particular community needs, and then shape their own two-week, public-purpose project, either individually or with a small group of classmates. Then, during the last two weeks of school, they embark on these off-campus projects. The seniors are responsible for making the appropriate contacts and setting up the actual project. An RCDS faculty member oversees each project and checks in with the site advisor before and during the project itself. At the end of their two weeks of service, seniors return to campus to share their experiences with the Upper School community.

The Senior Service Seminar, the prerequisite for Senior Term, led by the Director of Public Purpose, prepares students to research and select a community partner. Students have opportunities to engage in discourse in response to critical readings on service, a diverse range of guest speakers, historical exploration of the ethic of service, and the evolution of public purpose at RCDS. The Seminar engages students in learning about others' worldviews and sharpens their ability to plan and partner with a non-profit agency.

This year, the Service Seminar included explorations of moral and ethical approaches to service, a case study of charity in the aftermath of the 2010 earthquake in Haiti, an inspiring presentation by Audette Exel of the ISIS Foundation, a presentation by RCDS alumna Julie Kohn '05 on implications of hunger in the U.S. through the documentary film *A Place at the Table*, and a presentation by Erin Michelson on living the adventure philanthropist's life.

Spotlight on Senior Term 2012—New Orleans

During Senior Term 2012, the Senior Service Learning Trip traveled to the Lower Ninth Ward in New Orleans. Rather than simply replicate a model of service that often places students in unfamiliar spaces with hammer in hand, the group of students who applied to participate in the trip spent weeks in thoughtfully planned prerequisite classes to deepen their understanding of the community, geography, language, and culture of the area. The range of prerequisite units introduced the group to a variety of topics to facilitate critical thinking, skill acquisition, and reflection from an interdisciplinary approach. Some of the topics covered included:

- The River Always Wins: Ms. Bischoff
- Race, Class and Privilege: Dr. deChabert
- *New Orleans, An American City*: Dr. Strean
- *When the Levees Broke*: screening and discussion led by Ms. Sullivan and *Teaching the Levees*, Columbia University Press
- Poverty and Anxiety, Depression, and Socio-Emotional Health: Ms. Butera
- The Aftermath of Katrina, Media Images: Ms. Kubisch
- Francophone, French Dialects and New Orleans Parishes: Madame Mabry
- Dead Zones, Eroding Waterways and Outdoor Learning: Ms. Aranow
- Self Care & Socio-Emotional Selves-New Orleans participants before and after challenging trip experiences: Ms. Donahue
- Voyeurism & Paternalism, How to Ensure Authentic and Appropriate Service Relationships: Ms. Sullivan
- The Role of Politics Post Hurricane Katrina—FEMA, local and national government responses: Mr. Wieman

Spotlight on Senior Term 2012—New Orleans continued

During the trip, students spent three nights in Hotel Le Monteleone in the French Quarter and two nights in the Lower Ninth Ward Village, a local community center. In the French Quarter, students toured the WWII Museum, participated in a steamboat river tour, and visited the Historic New Orleans Collections to highlight much of what they learned prior to departing. While in the Lower Ninth Ward Village Center, they worked with the Executive Director and cleaned the common spaces in the center, organized furniture and material in the warehouse-turned-community center in preparation for a visit from the Congressional Black Caucus, and tended

an overgrown community garden. The most meaningful part of their journey was their time spent with local residents, truly listening to and learning from their stories. Students had not realized that the majority of residents of the Lower Ninth Ward were homeowners before Hurricane Katrina, or that the city imposed daily fines for grass that had become too long, which greatly impacted residents' ability to overcome existing financial burdens. Our students heard these first-hand accounts from the *heart* of the neighborhood, which in turn laid the necessary foundation for a deeper *hand* in service.



Students replant a Community Garden in New Orleans's Lower Ninth Ward.

Students at the Helm: RCDS's Public Purpose Outreach Programs

SET

The RCDS Saturday Enrichment and Tutorial (SET) program was established in the fall of 2007, spearheaded by RCDS Headmaster Scott Nelson in response to needs expressed by the local community for accessible academic enrichment programs. The program is open to children in grades 1-4 from Port Chester and focuses on English reading and writing skills. This year, more than 89 students enrolled in the fall trimester. The SET program recruits Upper School student-mentors who are trained by faculty in literacy instruction as a requirement of their service. Approximately 20 upper schoolers learn class-

room management techniques, literacy instruction, and take on several roles, including librarian, lead teacher, computer support, and support teacher. As part of students' training, they are asked to observe RCDS Lower School classrooms and to respond to the needs expressed by SET parent input. This year, all SET students had access to ipads and outdoor play during the program, specifically designed to increase speaking and listening skills. Snacks and a lending library were also provided at no cost. And while their children are participating in the Lower School classrooms, parents meet in the library for English instruction.



Students in the SET Program learn from their Upper School student-teachers.

SCOPE

The SCOPE (Student-Centered Outreach, Partnership & Enrichment) program developed out of an Upper School screening of *The Lottery*, the critically acclaimed documentary that exposes the controversy around public and charter schools in the United States, highlighting staggering statistics and heart-felt stories about the challenge to close the “access gap.” Each screening of the film, one for Upper School students and one for parents, was followed by a panel discussion in an effort to further educate audiences about the role of teaching and learning assessments, teaching tenure, unions, lobbyists, budgets, education politics and policies, and quality education as a right or a privilege. The screenings and the panels fit well with the public purpose mission to investigate the root of social disparities and to work to create innovative solutions through service.

Several Upper School students, moved by the portrayals and dismayed by the disparities, worked to develop the SCOPE program in an effort to share with – and learn from – students in the Port Chester school district. RCDS students initially envisioned working with the Port Chester students on SAT preparation—something they know well—but

after discussions with administrators at several public schools, they learned that SAT preparation was not the Port Chester students’ most critical need. Our students learned the important lesson that successful partnerships require compromise and the ability to learn from those with whom they partner, as they are the experts on their own needs.

SCOPE provides a vibrant learning environment that supports academic goals and objectives set by neighboring school programs for students in grades 4 and 5 from the Port Chester public school district. The program aims to support ongoing partner schools’ goals, foster a sense of community, and encourage social interactions between children in order to build confidence. The after-school program, which is taught by RCDS Upper School students, holds winter and spring terms consisting of six, two-hour sessions on Mondays and Wednesdays. RCDS provides transportation and covers all program costs. Each session is divided into three, thirty-minute blocks: Homework Help, Electives, and Recreation. SCOPE enrolls students determined by our partner schools, JFK Magnet and Park Avenue School in Port Chester. This year, the program has served 44 students in each term.

A typical day in SCOPE.



In Their Own Words: Sarah Peck & Jason Goettisheim, Co-Founders of the SCOPE Program



Sarah Peck & Jason Goettisheim

Jason Goettisheim '14 and Sarah Peck '13 have been involved with the SCOPE program since its inception. From their perspective, SCOPE is a collaborative project that aims to meet the educational resource gap in our local communities. Both students have been active participants in the traditional community service programs at RCDS, including volunteering at the Carver Center and teaching with the SET program.

How did you come up with the curriculum for SCOPE?

JG: *When we looked to develop the curriculum, we wanted to supplement what students get in the school day—not to replace it, but to really allow them to learn more when they go back to their traditional school environment. The curriculum came from meeting with teachers from their schools, meeting with teachers from our school, and really developing an idea of what the students need in their daily life. There are obviously limits and time constraints in the regular school day, so to offer SCOPE would supplement it.*

SP: *We early on decided that we would focus on literacy instead of math or science. Last year, it was much more purely literature, reading, writing, and then performing something that they had written. This year, we decided to branch out once we had enough time to include some of the more fun aspects of literature that some people don't have the chance to be exposed to when you have such a tight curriculum at school. So that's when we introduced mythology, dancing and movement.*

How do you benefit from working with the program?

SP: *For me, the interaction with the kids is my favorite part by far. I have learned a lot about teaching, what to do and what not to do in running a classroom, and coming up with your own curriculum. In addition to getting to know the kids and seeing them change so much in such a short period of time, I've definitely improved my public speaking skills and am more comfortable in front of people.*

Education and Exploration: Faculty and Staff Professional Development

JG: *The idea of public purpose is that the relationship is mutually beneficial. For me, the benefit was always going to the classroom and seeing the looks on the kids' faces when they understand something or when they finally understand the answer to a question they've always had. I've also enjoyed seeing the student volunteers at RCDS grow so much, becoming more confident in who they are as teachers and in organization and designing a lesson plan. They gain a lot of valuable leadership skills, and they become more comfortable teaching. For me, that growth from both sides, in both the students who come to the program and the students who volunteer for it, is what makes it worthwhile.*

What was one of your favorite moments from the program?

SP: *My favorite moment was on the last day. It was pretty hectic, but we finally got everything together. The parents were there for a showing of the movies that the students created for the program, and one of the girls brought her mom over to meet me. When she introduced me, she gave me a present, a mug with our initials on it. It was just really cute and showed how much she had formed a relationship with me over a period of just three weeks.*

JG: *I actually have a similar story. At the end of the session, a girl and her parents were actually crying from seeing her movie, and at the end she came up and she gave me a letter saying how grateful she was for the whole program. That really was invaluable to me.*

A commitment to professional growth and development is one of the distinguishing characteristics of the RCDS faculty and staff. Every initiative requires time and space for faculty and staff to learn, assimilate, and synthesize, with students' improved learning as the goal. On Professional Day in April 2012, RCDS faculty and staff had the opportunity to delve deeper into public purpose and service learning to set the stage for implementation in 2012-2013.

Professional Day 2012 began with a presentation by Director of Public Purpose Lynn Sullivan that encouraged faculty to explore important themes, such as why we serve others, good citizenship, assumptions about charity, and understanding partnership. Ms. Sullivan also spoke of a shift at the college level, where admissions officers now consider more than just an applicant's number of service hours; they want to know why students volunteered, what they got out of the experience, what they learned about themselves and others in the process, and how they have changed as a result of the experience.

Faculty and staff worked with colleagues to come up with a theme/slogan around food and its potential for related curricular connections and service-related outcomes—F.R.E.S.H. and Recipe for Change were born of their creativity. The activity was followed by division meetings to explore service learning in depth and grade-level meetings to establish curricular points of entry and cross-curricular connections. The morning wrapped up with reports from each grade-level team, presenting a blueprint for further discussion and curricular planning for 2012-2013. Later, an all-school Public Purpose Committee was established to support faculty integration of service learning into the curriculum. Meetings bring faculty in the three divisions together allowing them to help, encourage, and challenge each other, to collaborate with each other; and to educate others through teacher-to-teacher connections at faculty meetings with guidance

Public Purpose Special Events: 2012-2013

from the Director of Public Purpose and the Service Learning Coordinators. Members of the committee have developed and implemented service learning in their curricula and/or have expressed interest in the mission of public purpose.

To encourage continued thinking and planning into the summer, faculty and staff also generated a list of books and films for summer reading/watching. All titles were related to food themes: access to food, U.S. drought, GMOs, farm to table concepts, nutritional data, culture, sustainability of food drives, and so on. The summer reading and viewing were the basis for follow-up discussions during opening meetings in September 2012. Faculty and staff explored themes that are relevant to contemporary issues, shared new information learned from their selections and brainstormed curricular ties.

What We Read

The Grapes of Wrath by John Steinbeck

The Jungle by Upton Sinclair

The World According to Monsanto by Marie-Monique Robin

Animal, Vegetable, Miracle by Barbara Kingsolver

The Tummy Trilogy by Calvin Trillin

The \$64 Tomato by William Alexander

A History of the World in 6 Glasses by Tom Standage

The Big Oyster by Mark Kurlansky

In Defense of Food by Michael Pollan

Fast Food Nation by Eric Schlosser

Hope's Edge by Frances Moore Lappe and Anna Lappe

Four Fish by Paul Greenberg

What We Watched

Food Matters *Food, Inc.*

Supersize Me *Forks Over Knives*

King Corn

Majora Carter, Eco Entrepreneur

To inspire the RCDS community to learn and serve with innovative ideas, the Office of Public Purpose sponsored a visit by Majora Carter, internationally renowned Eco Entrepreneur and 2005 MacArthur "Genius" Fellowship recipient. In November, Ms. Carter spoke with the Middle School, the Upper School, and parents and community partners about her work with the Sustainable South Bronx project and her new ventures with green corporations. Ms. Carter shared her journey toward sustainable urban revitalization and long-term community partnerships. The evening presentation featured organic and sustainably farmed hors d'oeuvres, sponsored by the Auxiliary Sustainability Committee.

MLK National Day of Service Assemblies and First Annual Volunteer Fair

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. once said, "Life's most persistent and urgent question is: 'What are you doing for others?'" ... these words – projected on a large screen in the Dunn Performing Arts Center – capped this year's Middle and Upper schools' Martin Luther King assemblies in January. Both assemblies showcased poignant stories from members of our faculty who had faced challenges similar to those Dr. King faced, and juxtaposed those stories with thoughts from members of our student body describing their service experiences, both locally and globally. Afterwards, grades 8-12 were invited to participate in the first annual Volunteer Fair, where they met 11 non-profits and became acquainted with a diverse range of community agencies, including:

- AFYA Foundation
- Blythesdale Children's Hospital
- New Rochelle Humane Society
- Open Door Family Medical Center
- Port Chester Carver Center

- Port Chester Nursing & Rehabilitation
- Salvation Army
- Sarah Neuman Center for Healthcare & Rehabilitation
- Songcatchers
- The Sharing Shelf
- Volunteer Center of United Way

The Volunteer Fair challenged students to think about ways to live out the legacy of Dr. King and encouraged those new to outreach to explore their own interests through the missions of both familiar and unfamiliar service organizations.

Partners In Art: Rising Above Hurdles to Forge a New Partnership

This year saw the initiation of RCDS's Partners in Art project, a collaborative, cross-disciplinary, and cross-divisional effort whereby students are engaged in an art exchange with Haitian students to foster learning and cross-cultural understanding. The project involves partnering with Haiti Lumiere de Demain (HLD), an organization dedicated to improving education in Haiti, engaging students and teachers in art and reflection, learning about different cultures, and building bridges.

The first phase of the project asked RCDS art students in grades 3, 5, Middle School Photo, and AP Photo to create either self-portraits or photos of their favorite food in various stages of production that they would share with their Haitian art-pals. Realizing that digital content would be easiest to transmit to the U.S. but that the Haitian students would not have access to digital equipment, RCDS sent digital cameras to students in La Gonave so that they could take digital photos of their food in production and make self-portraits of themselves.



Art Department Chair Linda Greenhouse displays some of the food photography and artwork made by RCDS students.

In preparing the art for exchange, language differences emerged as another potential hurdle, as RCDS students wrote their descriptions in English, while the students in La Gonave speak either Creole or French. Undeterred, the Modern Languages Department answered the call for help by hosting a translation party involving French-speaking students, faculty, and staff, who used their language skills to translate the English text into French.

With the assistance of Loius Elneus, the founder of Haiti Lumiere de Demain, the work was exchanged. (He took prints of the RCDS work to Haiti, and he sent digital copies of the Haitian students'

work to the U.S.) RCDS AP Photo students were able to Skype with students in La Gonave, and the RCDS students were amazed and flattered to see their own work adorning the walls of the small library there. The Skype session was such a transformational moment in the project that arrangements are being made for the Middle School and Lower School students to do the same.

On February 22, 2013, RCDS sponsored a fund-raiser for HLD, featuring the students' work displayed side-by-side, along with ceramic bowls created by faculty and staff as part of the Empty Bowls project. The bowls were auctioned off, and posters of the students' artwork and metalwork replicas of the RCDS Seal made by Haitian craftsmen out of recycled oil drums were also sold. The evening raised over \$3,000 for HLD's programs.

Moving forward, the project will continue to evolve, with the first priority being to open up communication between the student art-pals. We will rely on our available technology and language translators to make it happen. Student reflection, a critical part of the service learning process, will also take place as we strive to create a long-lasting and mutually beneficial partnership.

Parent Involvement

The 2013-2014 school year will welcome interested parents to a new Public Purpose Parent Committee, which will fall under the RCDS Auxiliary. This team of parents will support the Office of Public Purpose by sharing ideas about family involvement and working to bolster communications about the mission and goals to various constituencies. This parent committee will work alongside the RCDS Board's Communications, Marketing & Outreach committee and will be looking for parent volunteers from all three divisions.

Alumni with a Purpose

Ethan Schwartz '00 returned to RCDS in the fall of 2011 to speak with seniors about his work with *Walk It Out*, a non-profit organization he began in Little Rock, Ark., to curb obesity, improve wellness, and introduce a sustainable form of exercise into the lives of elementary school children.

Amy Benerofe-Hylton '84 is the founder of Our New Way Garden in West Harrison, NY, and has been working with RCDS's Office of Public Purpose, Grade 8 community service, and the AP Biology class since the fall of 2011. She also will be working with Lower School faculty on introducing permaculture to the Lower School garden project.

Julie Kohn '05 returned to RCDS in April of 2013 to speak with eighth graders and seniors about her work as the Associate Producer of *A Place at the Table*, a documentary that explores the 50 million Americans struggling with hunger.

Alex Breinin '08 and his sister, **Caroline '10** have regularly reported to the RCDS community about their involvement with Wema Children's Center in Western Kenya. As a college student, Alex volunteered to teach at the Centre, a school and orphanage for 250 children ages 4-18 in rural Kenya, and he helped create its Web site and establish its non-profit status. Over the last few years Alex has helped Wema update its physical plant and curriculum, and his sister, Caroline, is now also involved. This winter, Caroline traveled to Wema with 15 used laptops that had been donated by RCDS families to establish a new computer center there and to help train the teachers and students. They have also established a penpal project between students at Wema and Upper School students.