



# *Childhood*

=THE GIFT OF=

*There is always one moment in childhood  
when the door opens and lets the future in.*

—GRAHAM GREENE

## **Since its inception in 1894,**

Kurn Hattin Homes has been providing a top-notch education and residential care for children in need, aged 5–15. Devoted administrators and staff share a deep commitment to providing a secure, nurturing environment where children prepare to rejoin their families and embark on a path toward a rich and purposeful adult life.

Over one hundred twenty-five years later, the original mission of the Homes' founder, Reverend Charles Dickinson, remains steadfast. Providing attentive, individualized care and support for children and helping families take steps toward stability and success are at the heart of this mission.







THE GIFT OF  
CHILDHOOD

# *Mind*

MINDS THAT EXPLORE, DISCOVER AND EXPAND

# *Body*

BODIES THAT RUN, LEAP FOR JOY, STRENGTHEN AND GROW



# *Spirit*

SPIRITS THAT RISE, TRANSFORM AND TRANSCEND





# *Heart*

HEARTS THAT OPEN, CONNECT AND FILL WITH FRIENDSHIP, LAUGHTER AND SONG

Kurn Hattin places a strong emphasis on nurturing the whole child—mind, body, heart and spirit. Programs and extracurricular activities cultivate strong social skills and foster emotional and physical development, as well as critical thinking and communication skills.

Southern Vermont's vast blue skies and seemingly endless rolling green hills provide a fitting backdrop for children at Kurn Hattin to explore their own boundless potential.







*Children are natural investigators; they learn by asking questions. Tactile exploration and observation are two valuable skills in understanding and making sense out of what they see.*

—CHRISTOPHER W. BARRY, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

### WHAT MAKES KURN HATTIN'S ACADEMIC PROGRAM DIFFERENT?

#### MULTI-AGED SKILLS GROUPING

Students are grouped by skills rather than by grade. This allows each child to feel both challenged and successful while working at his or her own pace.

#### SMALL CLASS SIZE

An average teacher-to-student ratio of 1:11 allows teachers to provide individualized support in order to meet each student's needs.

#### SOCIAL SKILLS CURRICULUM

Integrated throughout all programs at Kurn Hattin, this program focuses on developing essential skills for successful interaction with others, such as making friends, dealing with transitions, respecting others and working out problems by talking rather than fighting.

**“Wow! Look at this!”** A student in Mr. F's science class exclaims excitedly. He's just found a spectacular photo of a South American owl butterfly on a Web site. A few other students gather—eager to compare the interesting creatures they've found for their own rainforest poster projects.

It is only the third week of school at Kurn Hattin, and the class is already fully engaged in this independent research project. Over the next few weeks, students will research rainforest animals, plants and insects, take a virtual trip to a rainforest and write a journal about their experiences, and, finally, narrate a slideshow presentation for the class.

What is so remarkable is the contagious enthusiasm of these students. A steady stream of boys and girls approaches Mr. F. with questions and comments about their research. Students help one another, referring classmates to useful Web sites and sharing interesting facts. They are focused, curious and excited.

This is learning at its best.

At Kurn Hattin, learning means doing. Children gain valuable life skills through connecting and applying what they learn to the outside world. Classrooms are equipped with computers and state-of-the-art educational technology to maximize and support learning. A working farm, apple orchard and maple sugar grove provide opportunities to develop analytical skills through hands-on experience in the farm-science program, and the vocational skills program also offers practical training for a variety of job skills, such as small tool and machine repair.

In addition, Kurn Hattin offers an outstanding range of extracurricular programs where students can explore personal interests and develop useful life skills in a hands-on environment.







*As a child, you need the ability to try yourself out, to give yourself a chance at something. Kurn Hattin gave me that. They gave me the platform to flex my muscles and see what I was good at. When I was good at something, they weren't surprised. They already expected it from me.*

—GIGI AMBILA, CLASS OF 1999

Kurn Hattin's 280-acre campus offers ample space for exercise with playing fields, an outdoor pool, horse arena, gymnasium, hiking trails and expansive lawns for pick-up games. Children are encouraged to participate in a variety of competitive and intramural sports and to take advantage of the many opportunities to try new, enjoyable activities. The horseback riding program, for instance, offers students a unique chance to learn about themselves and their interactions with others through caring for and connecting with the animals. Through participation in these activities, boys and girls gain leadership and teamwork skills, self-discipline and a sense of collective responsibility.

Every day, the Kurn Hattin cafeteria provides three delicious, balanced meals that include a variety of healthy, wholesome food choices, often featuring items from Kurn Hattin's own farm, cultivated and harvested by the children themselves.

### **Sarah wants to tell her story.**

She is an eighth grader who speaks with seasoned confidence and maturity. "I came here in fifth grade," she says, and after a brief pause adds, "and my life totally changed."

Before Sarah came to Kurn Hattin, she lived with her mother, a single mom, in a large housing project in New York City.

"My mom had to work a lot because we needed the money, so she wasn't around much. Our neighborhood wasn't a good place for kids. You could get into a lot of trouble. Mom didn't want me running around where she couldn't keep an eye on me, so basically, I never did anything. I was kind of a couch potato. I just hung around at home when she was at work. I watched a lot of TV and ate junk food. I guess my life wasn't very healthy.

"When my mom told me she was sending me away to school, I thought she didn't love me. She drove me up here. I saw this place, and I thought, 'Now I'll be in the countryside with nothing to do.' I didn't think it would be good for me.

"But there are so many great things to do here: all the sports—soccer, volleyball, basketball—and there's horseback riding, and just being outside. Before I came here, I didn't know I could be good at something. I never had a chance to play soccer, try ice skating, or go canoeing. Trying all these new things—I've really grown up here. I became a healthy person. I know I'm going to do some kind of sport in high school, too, and even after that.

"Now I think about my mom's choice to send me here, and I know she really, really loves me."







*We all need one another; No one walks alone; Each stone we take from the path of a friend, the smoother we make our own.*

—JOANNA WOODHULL WEEKS, CLASS OF 1927

## HOW IS KURN HATTIN DIFFERENT FROM A TYPICAL RESIDENTIAL PROGRAM?

### COTTAGE LIFE

Children live in small cottages, with a maximum of 11 children per cottage. Houseparents are on duty to provide a caring and structured home environment.

### COUNSELING SUPPORT

Each child is assigned an individual counselor, with whom he or she meets regularly. This meeting is an open time to check in, share feelings, ask questions, and discuss academic or social issues.

### FAMILY SUPPORT

Kurn Hattin aims to serve children and their families. The primary goal is to partner with parents to provide a stepping stone toward regaining stability.

### DONOR SUPPORT

Kurn Hattin is unique in its status as a fully charitable institution, receiving its funding almost exclusively through private donations and in-kind contributions.

**It's the beginning of the school year**, and inside the common room of Hubbard Cottage, Mrs. P. is busy sewing a pair of bright new curtains for one of the girls' rooms. She's been a houseparent here at Kurn Hattin for 18 years. The curtains, she explains, are just one of her redecorating plans for this year. Already, a framed photo of each of the ten Hubbard Cottage girls hangs on the common room wall. On the bulletin board, a giant calendar marks each girl's birthday with a sticker depicting a slice of chocolate cake, and a poster lists the girls' daily chores. Down the hall, the bathroom has been adorned with decals of some of the girls' favorite Disney characters. The bedrooms are painted in warm, cheerful colors. Beds are neatly made, and stuffed animals sit patiently awaiting their owners' return.

Mrs. P. looks at the clock. "I'd better get snacks ready. The girls will be back from class in a few minutes." As she pours juice and lays out healthy after-school snacks, the cottage door begins to open, girls file in, hanging up jackets and backpacks, and soon, the dining table is transformed with laughter and lively chatter about the day's events, math homework and what's for dinner tonight.

This is a **home**.

Kurn Hattin provides a safe, stable environment where, surrounded by caring adults, children receive the nurturing, consistency and structure they need to grow and thrive. Wholly dedicated to meeting these essential needs, Kurn Hattin staff create a warm, welcoming family atmosphere, where children feel a sense of belonging and form strong bonds with others through mutual trust, respect and cooperation.







## THE GIFT OF CHILDHOOD || SPIRIT

Kurn Hattin recognizes that—much like the sugar maple tree—children have magnificent inner promise and potential that must be tapped and cultivated. The school's well-rounded program offerings provide abundant opportunities for all students to shine—be it in sports, music, art, drama or academics. In Kurn Hattin's first-rate music program, all children participate in regular musical concerts, and older children learn to play an instrument of their choice and may choose to join the marching or jazz band. Through individual attention, encouragement and positive reinforcement, children at Kurn Hattin build self-esteem and confidence and feel empowered to explore their own unique talents and capabilities.

**In Vermont in early March**, the sap of the sugar maple tree begins to run. Having been stored in the tree roots all winter, the thin, clear liquid rises once again, filling the trunk and branches with sweet potential. Every year at this time, children at Kurn Hattin carefully hammer taps into the trunks of these trees on campus. They hang buckets and connect the long, thin pipeline to collect the sap, drip by drip, until they have enough to take to the Kurn Hattin sugar house. Here, the sap is boiled over a hot wood fire, steam rising as the liquid turns slowly thicker, darker and sweeter. The children's hard work and patience are richly rewarded when the pure golden syrup they've made is served for breakfast in the cafeteria, alongside steaming stacks of freshly made pancakes.

**... Nature's promise fulfilled.**





*Acts of tenderness, of sympathy, of help,  
are gifts of priceless value, pure gold  
beneath the glitter that attracts.*

-REVEREND DICKINSON, FOUNDER, KURN HATTIN HOMES

## ===== Kurn Hattin Milestones =====



- 1849** Charles A. Dickinson, founder, was born in Westminster, Vermont
- 1872** Charles Dickinson graduated from Harvard College
- 1879** Charles Dickinson graduated from Andover Theological Seminary
- 1894** Reverend Dickinson took a leave from Berkeley Temple to establish the Kurn Hattin Home for Boys
- 1894** Kurn Hattin Homes was incorporated in Vermont on August 18, 1894
- 1894** Volume 1, No. 1 of the Kurn Hattin magazine was published
- 1895** Bequest of Sarah J. Warner's home and property in Saxtons River, VT, which later became the Girls' Department
- 1897** First Annual Meeting of the Vermont Corporation was held in Westminster
- 1900** Permanent endowment fund was started with a legacy of \$2,000
- 1907** Reverend Dickinson passed away
- 1907** The title "Kurn Hattin Home Association" was replaced by "New England Kurn Hattin Homes"
- 1908** Main Building, now known as Mathey Building, was destroyed by fire
- 1914** The Kurn Hattin Alumni Association was founded
- 1923** Kurn Hattin began admitting girls
- 1927** W. I. "Pete" Mayo took over as Kurn Hattin director and served for 35 years
- 1931** A band was organized at the boys' campus and an orchestra on the girls' campus
- 1935** The Kurn Hattin magazine became *The Kurn Hattin Bulletin*
- 1963** School became coeducational, busing students between campuses
- 1963** Mr. Mayo passed away
- 1978** Long-term goal of having all Kurn Hattin children live in small cottages was achieved
- 1989** The Mayo Memorial Center was dedicated
- 1994** Kurn Hattin celebrated 100 years of service
- 2005** Maysilles Cottage was erected, named for David J. Maysilles, class of 1943, former executive director
- 2006** The Therapeutic Riding Program was implemented to provide children with strategies for self-awareness, focus, confidence, and healthy bonding
- 2007** Maysilles Cottage was completed and dedicated
- 2008** David J. Maysilles was elected President of the Board of Trustees
- 2009** The Lewis Cottage, named for Trustee Janet "Sis" Lewis and her family, was established in a renovated section of the Thomas Building to provide a temporary respite for individualized counseling and healing for children in crisis
- 2013** The first annual Charles Albert Dickinson Award, given in recognition of an individual or organization whose philanthropic commitment embodies the mission of Kurn Hattin Homes, was presented to the National Society of New England Women
- 2014** Music Director Lisa Bianconi was honored as a top ten finalist for GRAMMY Music Educator of the Year
- 2014** Connie Sanderson was the first woman installed as Executive Director
- 2015** The Kurn Hattin Select Choir performed The National Anthem at Fenway Park in September, opening for the Boston Red Sox against the Tampa Bay Rays
- 2015** Members of all departments collectively agreed on five Core Values that defined the work done at Kurn Hattin: Perseverance, Nurturance, Hope, Compassion, and Sense of Worth
- 2019** Kurn Hattin celebrates its 125<sup>th</sup> anniversary kicking off with the Select Choir Star-Spangled Banner Heritage Tours.





===== *Thank you for your help.* =====

As a charitable 501(c)(3) organization, Kurn Hattin depends on private support to fulfill its mission. Kurn Hattin's legion of loyal supporters, as well as sound stewardship of resources, have enabled the Homes to maintain an exemplary program for children in need.

Donations may be made to the Annual Fund, Kurn Hattin's Endowment, Trusts, Bequests, Planned Gifts, Special Projects and the Charitable Gift Annuity Program. Please contact Kim Fine by phone at (802) 721-6914, or by e-mail at [kfine@kurnhattin.org](mailto:kfine@kurnhattin.org) for information on how you can help.

#### **Kurn Hattin Homes**

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#### **MEMBERSHIPS AND AFFILIATIONS**

Association of Fundraising Professionals  
Coalition for Residential Education CORE  
National Association of Social Workers  
The National Fellowship of Child Care Executives  
NH & VT Council of Charitable Gift Planners  
Student and Exchange Visitor Information System  
Vermont Business Roundtable  
Vermont Independent School Association  
Vermont Principals' Association

#### **ACCREDITATION AND LICENSING**

Independent School Approval by the Vermont State Board of Education  
Department of Children and Families, State of Vermont