



## OUR NATION'S GENERATIONS: SUSTAINABLE CITIES

### THIS YEAR'S EXHIBITION

#### *Our Nation's Generations:*

*Sustainable Cities*, is a partnership

between the **Fairfield Museum**, **New Beginnings Family Academy** (a Bridgeport public charter school), and **The Unquowa School** (an independent day school in Fairfield).

Together the students, teachers and museum staff planned and created an exhibition on urban renewal that promotes personal and meaningful connections between students, history and today's world.



The students with their teachers at McLevy Green in Bridgeport, Conn.

Over the past four months, eighth grade students from **The Unquowa School** partnered with fifth graders from **New Beginnings Family Academy**. The older students mentored the younger ones, jointly engaging in activities and a photography walking tour and that explored Bridgeport's history and architectural heritage. They also learned about Bridgeport's urban planning initiatives, including Mayor Bill Finch's **BGreen 2020** strategies for sustainable, community-based projects.

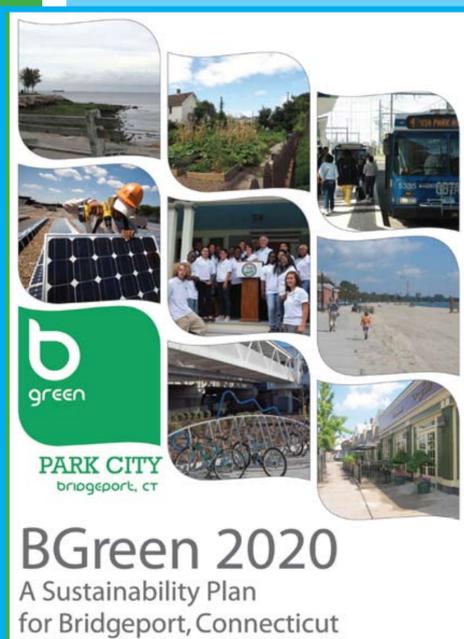
Two key questions guided the students' thinking about this exhibition:

**How can an abandoned building or empty lot help  
to change the city of Bridgeport?**

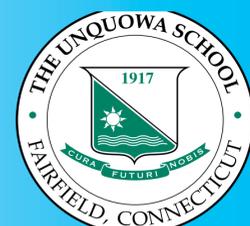
**What is your vision for sustainability and positive growth  
for the future of this city?**

Divided into eight groups, the students took an active, collaborative approach to solving local urban problems. They explored issues surrounding future preservation and the adaptive re-use of buildings to create productive environments for the future.

*Support for this exhibition has been generously provided by Brody Wilkinson PC, Fairfield County Community Foundation, Newman's Own Foundation, People's United Bank, the Fairfield Museum Board of Directors and Museum Members as part of an effort to extend the value of history education to all students.*



New Beginnings Family Academy



# sustainable CITIES

## OUR NATION'S GENERATIONS: SINCE 2008

**OUR NATION'S GENERATIONS** was launched in

2008 by the Fairfield Museum to develop new educational initiatives. The goal is to provide opportunities for students from partnering schools **to make connections with the past** through research and inquiry into their own families and communities. The Museum works closely with teachers and students to create innovative classroom projects, learning activities, Museum visits and tours of local historic sites. The outcome is a student-curated exhibition which reinforces curriculum and creates an understanding of personal history.



The 2011 student exhibition, "The New Beginnings Family," featured a mixed-media "Story Quilt."



The 2009 student exhibition.

In 2009 and 2010 the Museum worked with The Unquowa School's eighth graders to delve into family history. The students created the title ***Our Nation's Generations*** and the first exhibit was guided by the question: ***What is a treasured object in your family?*** The students identified treasured heirlooms and conducted family interviews, discovering the stories behind these objects. In 2010 the exhibit ***Letters in Time*** transformed oral histories into fictionalized historical accounts, strengthening family ties and creating links between the past and present.



The 2010 student exhibition, "Letters in Time."



In 2011, the Museum presented ***The New Beginnings Family*** with the New Beginnings Family Academy. The fifth grade students worked with the theme: ***Who is a positive role model in my life?*** The students identified a person who had inspired them, wrote uplifting essays about that person and created colorful paintings. The final project — a vibrant ***Story Quilt*** — was inspired by celebrated African American artist **Faith Ringgold**, whose artwork was also exhibited. The project encouraged the youth to think positively about their role in the future.



The "Story Quilt" of student paintings.



New Beginnings Family Academy



Fairfield Museum  
AND HISTORY CENTER

