

Connecticut History Comes Alive At Middle Gate

[By Eliza Hallabeck](#)

Famous Connecticut residents, past and present, shared their stories on Thursday, April 12, when Middle Gate fourth grade students presented the school's annual Living Biographies project.

In each of the fourth grade classrooms at the school, students were dressed as their chosen Connecticut residents, and when touched gently on the shoulder by visiting students, parents, and community members, the students shared their studied resident's biography.

In Linda Baron, Heidi Beauty, Tisha McCoy, and John Sullivan's classrooms students wore a range of outfits, from colonial era-like bonnets to ice skates.

"They worked so hard. They are enthused. They have practiced night and day. Some students said they couldn't sleep a wink," said Ms Baron, "and they have practiced their speeches top to bottom."

From Katharine Hepburn and Ethan Allen to Ella T. Grasso and Charles Goodyear, the students portrayed a wide range of Connecticut residents.

"Hello. Can you guess who I am?" said fourth grader Leah Lewis, wearing a silver sequin top with pink and black detailing. "I'm a famous female ice skater originally from Russia. I won two gold metals in skating in world competitions in the 1970s. I participated in the 1988 Winter Olympics. If you guessed I'm Ekaterina Gordeeva, then you are right."

While Ekaterina Gordeeva was born in 1971 in Moscow, she currently lives in Simsbury, as Leah reported on Thursday.

"Next time you go ice skating, look for me," said Leah as Ekaterina Gordeeva. "I may just be there."

Across the room, Cole Morelli portrayed Ethan Allen, an American Revolutionary War hero who was born in Connecticut. Cole said he liked both the project and studying Ethan Allen, because he likes history.

In Mr Sullivan's class this year, one resident was portrayed for the first time among the Living Biographies.

"Suzanne Collins was a new one, because of *The Hunger Games* popularity and her living in town," said Mr Sullivan.



Middle Gate fourth grade student Victoria Stevens portrayed Katharine Hepburn during the school's Living Biographies event on Thursday, April 12.

Meg Ryan and Katharine Hepburn are popular picks each year, said Mr Sullivan, and the two actresses were again popular picks.

"They worked extremely hard and it has all paid off today," Mr Sullivan said.

Fourth grader Bret Pierce said he chose to study Aaron Hernandez because he is his favorite football player. Studying Aaron Hernandez allowed Bret to learn more about him, he said.

Another fourth grader Sydney Howard portrayed Emma Heart Willard, and said she chose to study her, "because she is a teacher and I want to be a teacher when I grow up."

Emma Hart Willard was born in Connecticut in 1787 and went on to found the first school for female higher education in the country.

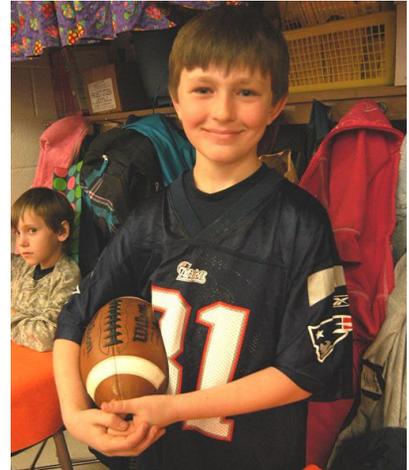
"I didn't know a lot about Emma Hart Willard before," said Sydney, "so now I know a lot about her."

Ms Beauty said the fourth grade teachers are always proud of the students when this time of the year comes, really shine."

Inventors, Ms Beauty said were popular for the students to study this year, like Eli Whitney and John Fitch.

Fourth grader Jared Robertson studied John Fitch. When asked Jared said he chose John Fitch to study, "because he invented the first steam boat and he looked like me."

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Middle Gate fourth grader Bret Pierce acted as his favorite football player, Aaron Hernandez, during the school's Living Biographies event.