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**PRESTIGIOUS TAFT SCHOOL SELECTS CLEARLAKE FURNITURE
TO CRAFT ECO-FRIENDLY TABLES.**

***Vermont company to hand-craft 62 tables for Connecticut school's
renovation using wood from sustainable forests.***

LUDLOW, VT — When the renovation of the highly acclaimed Taft School in Watertown, CT, is completed next fall, students at the private academy will be dining on Vermont-made tables that have already received high grades in creativity and craftsmanship from the school's administration.

ClearLake Furniture of Ludlow, VT, teamed with architects Eric Svahn, AIA, and Matthew Formicola of the award-winning Gund Partnership to design tables that would reflect the new décor of the dining room renovation. The two firms worked together to develop the design to exacting specifications. ClearLake's owner Brent Karner and one of his master craftsmen, Doug Ficken, ensured that the final result was structurally feasible and sound.

Karner also tackled a unique challenge. The school requested that the table tops be removable but requested that the woodworker create a system that did not use bolts and hooks. Karner trained at the North Bennet Street School in Boston. There, he learned the age-old techniques of furniture-making, so he used his skills to engineer a springboard system that used wood, not hardware.

The dining tables are no small undertaking. Of the 62 being crafted, 54 round tables measure 78 inches in diameter and the remaining eight are rectangular and eight feet in length. Each table will be crafted by hand by Karner, Ficken, and their team of master craftsmen in the ClearLake Furniture workshop, a converted 19th century barn in southern Vermont's Green Mountains.

Karner says they are using white oak that has been certified by the Forest Stewardship Council, which promotes sustainable forest management. To be FSC-certified, Ficken explains that the wood is tagged and carefully tracked from the forests to the mills where it is made into lumber. Every board, he says, is individually identified so the woodworker can trace the wood to its origins. "We know where every piece of wood came from. There is a vigilant chain of custody and we take every step to make sure nothing is compromised."

ClearLake Furniture adheres to the strict environmental standards of the Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) Green Building Rating System™. Karner says, "Earth-friendly building shouldn't end with the walls. It needs to be present in every space inside and out, as a reminder that our resources are too valuable to ignore."



The Taft School renovation, which is scheduled for completion in fall 2010, will be LEED certified. In order to qualify for the certification by the U.S. Green Building Council, the project must reflect sustainable building and development practices. Last year, Gund Partnership received the LEED Gold Certification for its own office renovation in Cambridge, Massachusetts.

About ClearLake Furniture

ClearLake Furniture was founded in 1992 with the mission of creating fine hardwood furniture, one piece at a time. Owner and master craftsman Brent Karner guides a team of highly skilled furniture makers who handcraft every piece of hardwood furniture in a workshop located under the 3,000 square-foot gallery, all situated in a renovated Vermont barn. Customers choose every detail for their customized pieces and are even invited to select the wood from the raw lumber. Visitors can tour the workshop daily and chat with the woodworkers. For more information, visit www.clearlakefurniture.com or call 800-758-8767.

About Gund Partnership

Based in Cambridge, MA, the Gund Partnership was founded by Graham Gund, FAIA, in 1971. With principals John Prokos, Laura Cabo, and Youngmin Jahan, the firm has been the recipient of more than 100 regional and national design excellence awards — including the Urban Land Institute's 2008 Award for Excellence. Gund Partnership is renowned for its work with cultural and educational institutions, including the Cleveland Botanical Garden, Cornell University, Tufts University, Rose Art Museum at Brandeis University, and Fernbank Museum of Natural History (Atlanta, GA). The firm's services include site planning, programming, architectural design, sustainability and LEED certification. For more information, visit www.gundpartnership.com or call 617-250-6800.

About Taft School

Founded in 1890 as a private school for boys, Taft School is named for its first headmaster, Horace Dutton Taft, the brother of President William Howard Taft. With a mission of educating the "whole student", the school's 114 faculty members educate 570 boys and girls from 35 states and 28 countries. The 220-acre campus in western Connecticut features facilities that rival those of many small colleges, including a 45,000 square-foot science and mathematics building, a library with 53,000 volumes, two theaters, and two hockey rinks. For more information, visit www.taftschool.org or call 860-945-7777.

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