



New Horizons...



ANNUAL REPORT
July 1st, 2010 - June 30th, 2011

Our Sisters' School - Class of 2011

"Looking out on you now, I know that in only two days time, you will no longer be the ten faces that I see each time I look up from my desk in the front of the classroom. You will all be off, embarking on extraordinary journeys of self-discovery, testing your limits, and learning from your triumphs and your failures. I wish I could tell you that the road ahead will be easy, but that would be a lie. It will be difficult, you will be pushed outside of your comfort zone, and you will experience every conflicting emotion that independence has to offer. However, in the midst of all this change and confusion, you should always know that you have a family here supporting you every step of the way."

Ms. Cosantino, 8th Grade Teacher - Graduation, June 2011

At the end of Year Three, Our Sisters' School -- an independent, tuition-free middle school for the girls of Greater New Bedford -- celebrated its first graduating class and launched Year Four of its ongoing voyage.





MISSION

The mission of Our Sisters' School is to inspire and educate middle-school girls from the Greater New Bedford area to reach their full potential in a safe, supportive and challenging environment. Our Sisters' School provides a quality education and welcomes girls from diverse faiths, races and cultures.

LETTER FROM THE BOARD

The recently-completed 2010-2011 school year was a banner one for Our Sisters' School. When the year began, we opened our doors for the first time to a full complement of students in all four grades. When the year ended, we saluted our first class of graduates and watched with pride as these outstanding young scholars embarked on the next leg of their educational voyage. This was an eye-opening experience not only for the graduates but for families with little previous exposure to the world of independent schools and all the challenges and opportunities such schools offer. We held mock interviews, traveled with the students and their families to various schools and in various other ways assisted them through the many rigors of the application process.

We are happy to report that the school remains in sound financial shape. We continue to spread the word and to receive generous support from the Greater New Bedford community as well as from surrounding towns. Support from foundations also remains strong and growing. Thanks to one and all!

Thanks also to our staff and our crew of more than 150 volunteers. Because of you we are able to reaffirm -- with great pride! -- that OSS remains an oasis of learning in New Bedford and that it continues to realize its mission to educate and inspire our students in a safe and supportive environment. New Bedford needed a snug harbor where girls can learn and grow and in the process come to understand that life, whatever its daily difficulties, can indeed be filled with possibilities and hopes heretofore undreamed of.

Lisa Schmid Alvord
President, Board of Trustees



“Attending Our Sisters’ School has shaped my life greatly. The people that I have met, students and faculty, became a major part of my life. They are like my second family. I have no secrets to hide from them and I can be myself. They will not judge me for who I am. They will always be in my heart no matter where my path leads. Meeting these people was more than a lucky coincidence; it was fate.”

Samantha Chan,
Class of 2011

LETTER FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

They came to us on September 3, 2008 as the first 6th grade class at Our Sisters' School during our very first year as a school. They wanted to be professional basketball players, nurses, veterinarians and lawyers. They had dropped out of Tae Kwon Do classes because there wasn't enough money to pay for the lessons. They had been going home on the bus after school every day because there was no car to pick them up from other programs. They thought New Bedford wasn't a place to be proud of. Some of them didn't like to read. Some of them didn't think they were good at math. All of them wanted a good education and opportunities for their future. All of them wanted to be part of OSS.

First they learned how to study effectively, how to be organized and how to manage their time. Slowly they took responsibility for their own learning, their own actions and their own futures. They learned how to work in cooperative learning groups, how to present information to others and how to introduce themselves to unfamiliar adults and take them on tours of our school. They learned soccer, lacrosse and basketball and they learned to run cross-country, hold different yoga poses and workout with Zumba moves. They fell in love with great books and great authors. They mastered the basics and moved so quickly through materials that we had to purchase an advanced math curriculum. Their parents asked, with smiles of wonder, what we were doing to their daughters and joked (sort of) that they would like to come to our school too.

They sailed on the EnviroLab boat and introduced presenters at community events. They handed out medals and collected recyclable water bottles at the finish line of the New Bedford Half Marathon. They did litter clean-ups with Operation Clean Sweep. They attended the symphony and listened to the lessons shared by others from our community at our morning meeting speakers' series. They went to the Whaling Museum, the Ocean Explorium and the Boston Museum of Science and MFA. They walked or ran in 5K's. They volunteered at the Working Waterfront Festival. They sang carols for the Downtown Stroll. They fell in love with their own city and discovered how they could impact and transform the community and the world around them. They won the spirit award at a math, basketball and chess tournament. And they studied, studied, studied and studied some more.

Then, like the sister sailors before them, they cast their eyes to the horizon and intrepidly charted a course to high school and beyond. Now they want to be anesthesiologists, oceanographers, authors, mechanical engineers, orthopedic surgeons and teachers. They want to help others, to serve as role models for their younger siblings and our younger students, and to soak up the opportunities in front of them to find new passions. They want to explore new libraries, as they've already read everything on the shelves at OSS. They want to learn. They want to live life fully. They want to lead. And they will.

Our deep and most heartfelt appreciation goes out to you – our supporters – for making this voyage possible for the OSS Class of 2011 and for all of the students who follow in their wake. Your belief in these young women, and in this young program, has made this voyage possible. Now, as a full four-year middle school, we turn our gaze to the horizon and begin the next leg of our journey with our next class of graduates. We are grateful to those of you who continue to fill our sails and to join our crew. We look forward to the next round of stories to share.

With gratitude,
Lisa Yates, *Executive Director*



“I very much enjoyed my visit to Our Sisters’ School. It’s really amazing how much you have accomplished: you have a really good school up and running so quickly... You figured out the need of your community and shaped a school to fill that need.”

Carolyn Peter,
Friend of OSS



List of Schools the Class of 2011 Applied to:

(Bold letters indicate schools our students enrolled in)

Bishop Stang High School (1)

Bristol County Agricultural

High School

Cambridge School of Weston

Concord Academy

Deerfield Academy

Falmouth Academy

Global Learning Charter

Public School

Greater New Bedford Regional

Vocational Technical

High School (4)

Lincoln School (1)

Loomis Chaffee

Middlesex School

Milton Academy

Phillips Academy Andover (1)

Pomfret School

Portsmouth Abbey School

St. Andrew's School

St. George's School (1)

Tabor Academy (1)

The Wheeler School (1)

Walnut Hill School

FIRST YEAR OF OSS'S SECONDARY SCHOOL PROGRAM MET WITH SUCCESS

Many of you reached out to us with great enthusiasm to help with this next part of the voyage for the students in the Class of 2011. We can't thank you enough for your unwavering support and the time that many of you have spent to help launch our new secondary school program that prepared our graduates for success beyond the doors of OSS. They graduated from OSS feeling confident and ready for the journey ahead, and certainly make our school and community very proud.

Your efforts working directly with the students and their families to coach them on their interviewing and essay-writing skills, providing transportation to visit school campuses, and helping to complete financial aid forms and online applications with families were instrumental in successfully accomplishing the many pieces of the secondary school process.

Our Sisters' School has established strong connections with many independent and local high schools, which have been incredibly supportive this first year. We are grateful to these schools for embracing our students and program.

Thank you to Ms. Howard and the Secondary School Committee for your hard work in developing this program and sharing your wealth of knowledge and experience.

With the first year of our secondary school program complete, we have met with success and are excited to follow the voyage of our graduates. As the program continues to develop, we promise to each eighth-grade class a comprehensive and rewarding process to ensure a bright continuation of each student's educational journey.

OSS 2010-2011 VOLUNTEERS SPEAK OUT

"The welcoming atmosphere, folks grateful for the smallest efforts, and seeing students grow and learn are what I most enjoy about volunteering at OSS."

Marge Waite, Volunteer

"I have seen OSS grow by graduating their first class and developing a strong mentor program."

Jim McNamee, Latin Teacher & Teacher Mentor

"I would tell a potential volunteer that coming to OSS and helping out is its own reward and that you *can* make a big difference."

Wendy Tse, Volunteer

"Volunteering at OSS is a wonderful experience. Just knowing that this school is available for our middle-school girls is awesome. *You* can be part of this great adventure."

Ann Healy, Volunteer

VOLUNTEERS

The volunteer community is an integral part of the success of Our Sisters' School. On a weekly basis, as many as 50 caring individuals embody our volunteer program. It is with the amazing investment of these volunteers that our students and staff receive support with evening study tutoring, after-school athletics, world language tutoring, library organization, office work, as well as enrichment classes such as Latin, Technology and Health. Through the generous gift of the invaluable time and energy given by our volunteers, the students are reminded on a daily basis of how important it is to give back to the very community that nurtures and believes in them. We thank each of you for dedicating your time and energy to our school! If you are interested in learning more about volunteer opportunities please contact Hillary Parker at hparker@oursistersschool.org or visit www.oursistersschool.org/html/volunteer.html.

Thank you to all of our 2010-2011 volunteers for having such an incredible impact on Our Sisters' School.

Aleardi, Marge
Abella-Bowen, Meaghan
Adams, Susan
Albert, Meg
Alvord, Joel
Alvord, Lisa Schmid
Arnold, Elizabeth
Arteaga, Peter
Ash, Chris
Baker, Jr., Talbot
Baldwin, Christine
Banzi, Shauna
Barlow, Cody
Barlow, Maria
Baron, Dianne
Barrett, Laurie
Barrett, Nancy
Bascom, Christina
Bedell, Barbara
Berube, Warren
Bischel, Jan
Blood, Briana
Boreiko, Ali
Boreiko, Thomas
Brooke, Debbie
Canning, Gaelen
Canning, Peter
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Pina, June
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Tse, Wendy
Underwood, Joan
Waite, Marge
West, Janet
Westgate, Emily
White, Amanda
White, Annie
White, Elizabeth
Wilbur, Kathy
Wotka, Sarah

“Throughout my time at OSS, I have participated in a variety of sports, volunteering activities, clubs, arts, enrichments and school events. Participating in all these events has given me the ability to grow. Each time I accomplish a task, it leaves an impact and teaches me something new.”

Carissa Mak,
Class of 2011

COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

Our Sisters’ School is fortunate to have a wide variety of committed community partners sharing in the voyage each year. We are grateful to each and every organization for collaborating with us, exposing our girls to incredible opportunities and challenging our students to be active members of our local community.

- Baker Books
- Boys And Girls Club Of Greater New Bedford
- Bristol Community College
- Buttonwood Park Zoological Society
- Café Balena
- Child & Family Services, Inc.
- Community Foundation of Southeastern Massachusetts
- Cuttyhunk Ferry Company
- Dartmouth Grange 162 Inc.
- Dartmouth Public Schools
- Friends Academy
- Gifts To Give, Inc.
- Global Learning Charter Public School
- Greater New Bedford Regional Vocational Technical High School
- HarbOur House
- Humane Society and Shelter-SouthCoast
- Immigrants Assistance Center, Inc.
- Junior Achievement
- Kaminhu Longi Dance Troupe
- Lloyd Center for the Environment
- Marion Institute
- Mass in Motion
- Nativity Preparatory School of New Bedford
- New Bedford Ballet
- New Bedford Half Marathon
- New Bedford Historical Society
- New Bedford Jewish Convalescent Home, Inc.
- New Bedford Public Schools

- New Bedford Symphony Orchestra
- New Bedford Whaling Museum
- New Bedford Whaling National Historical Park
- Ocean Explorium at New Bedford Seaport
- Office of Bristol County District Attorney
- Operation Clean Sweep
- Our Lady of Assumption Church
- Peace Works!
- Peter Pan Bus Lines
- RAPPP Program
- Rotch-Jones Duff House & Garden Museum
- Salvation Army New Bedford
- Sid Wainer & Son
- South Coast Hospitals Group
- South Coast Serves
- Steamship Authority
- The Five Growers
- The Working Waterfront Festival
- Tifereth Israel Synagogue
- Tri-County Symphonic Band
- Trips for Kids
- UMass Dartmouth
- United Way of Greater New Bedford
- Women’s Fund of the Community Foundation of Southeastern Massachusetts
- The Working Waterfront Festival
- YWCA Southeastern MA
- Zeiterion Performing Arts Center



OSS FINANCIAL SUMMARY

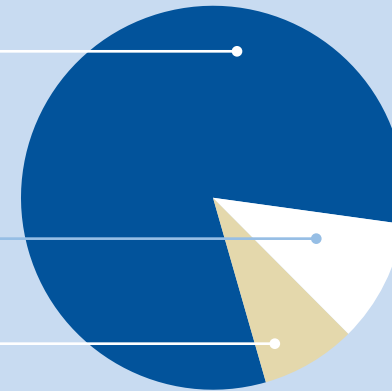
Our Sisters’ School has maintained a steady course in Fiscal Year 2011 and we confidently report that 81% of dollars raised go directly towards our program expenses. We thank our donors, foundations, grants and the community for investing in and believing in Our Sisters’ School. As we continue to sail on, we are continuing to grow our sustainability fund, giving each student the promise of a four-year education at OSS. We are deeply grateful for your ongoing support and generosity.

EXPENSES

Program Expenses: **81%**

General Administration: **11%**

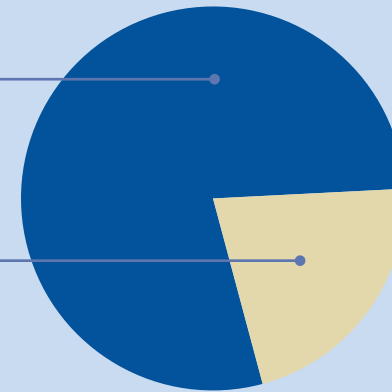
Fundraising: **8%**



MONIES RAISED

Individuals: **78%**

Grants: **22%**



“Thank you so much for taking the time out of what I know is a tremendously busy day to meet and give us a tour of OSS. It was truly impressive and inspiring.

I was very moved by your mission; the girls; the obvious dedication of you and the faculty and staff; and what you are up against in terms of many of the challenges that New Bedford presents.”
Friend of OSS



**THANK YOU TO ALL OF OUR SUPPORTERS FOR MAKING THE 2011 FISCAL YEAR
A SUCCESS! REPORT REFLECTS DONATED GOODS AND FINANCIAL CONTRIBUTIONS.**

July 1st, 2010 to June 30th, 2011

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*Every effort has been made to make this donor report complete and correct.
Please accept our apologies and let us know of any errors we missed by calling OSS at 508-994-1255.
Thank you!*



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Please accept our apologies and let us know of any errors we missed by calling OSS at 508-994-1255.
Thank you!*

“It was a privilege to see OSS up close and personal. There’s a lot of sweat and tears and work going on to support these girls – it’s evident in every inch of the place. More importantly, there’s also love.”

OSS Donor

“The girls are articulate, enthusiastic and poised.”

OSS Donor

“Our Sisters’ School is my favorite place to support.”

OSS Sponsor



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Every effort has been made to make this donor report complete and correct. Please accept our apologies and let us know of any errors we missed by calling OSS at 508-994-1255. Thank you!

“It was truly delightful to play for and meet some of your students - they are a terrific bunch of girls and the whole environment was so warm and positive.

All the girls we met were lively, interested and engaging. It would be a real pleasure to be at Our Sisters’ School again.”

Leslie Stroud,
Musical Presenter
with the New Bedford
Symphony Orchestra





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508-994-1255
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July 1, 2010 - June 30, 2011

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