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 Lisa Schmid Alvord, Board President and Co-founder

It was a historic moment in New Bedford, as the Charles W. Morgan returned to the city where it was built some 80 years ago. The purpose of this trip however was not to bring home whale oil, but to inform the public about our maritime history. How fitting for Our Sisters’ School, as we complete our sixth year and continue to give our students a trip similar to that of the wives of sea captains a century ago; today our students’ voyage, however, is on the sea of knowledge.

We experienced a seamless transfer of leadership as Sarah Herman took the reins in July 2013 to steer the next leg of the School’s voyage. Her leadership has been inspirational. As the year rolled out, Sarah infused the School with a strong sense of teamwork and each member’s responsibility toward our community. One of the great challenges remains the instructional model which she continues to refine and hone. Her approach toward education provides the basis for an enlightened and improved educational experience. Under the guidance of Launie Knight, our graduates received full scholarships from independent schools such as Milton Academy and St. Andrew’s, while every student who applied was accepted at the Vocational School.

On the financial side, Carlene LeBlanc, Sarah and the finance committee have kept the School operating within budget and continue to be both vigilant and creative in balancing the needs of the School within the constraints. Last year we voted to put a portion of our monies from the Sustainability Fund into the Common Fund. By the end of May we saw an increase in that fund of 11.6 percent, a much-welcomed windfall.

It has been a year of transition as our highly competent Director of Development, Abby Magni, chose a wonderful opportunity to further her career by taking a job at Wheaton College. Alice Flint and John Vasconcellos led the search committee to find a well-seasoned Advancement Director. We are pleased to welcome Georgie Goulding.

Bill Prescott, Gaelen Canning and Russ Weigel put together a provocative and highly reflective retreat for board members. Under the guidance of Larry Langford we discussed and analyzed the perceived strengths and weaknesses of the School, as well as the challenges the School faces as it moves forward.

Three of our founding trustees are stepping off the board this year. The contributions of Kate Dabney, Gail Fortes and Helena DaSilva Hughes have been immeasurable in building the foundation of Our Sisters’ School. Their wisdom, sound judgment and hard work can be seen today in the success of students’ educational experiences. We have been fortunate to have such passionate advocates for our mission.

We also welcomed Steve Barker to the board. Steve’s educational background is impressive and as Head of Friends Academy, he brings a wealth of knowledge to the table.

In closing, I am reminded of an OSS parent who told Bernadette Souza that before attending our school her daughter was on the wrong track, uninterested in school and bound for trouble. Today she is a motivated student at OSS and thinking about her next school. She brings a wealth of knowledge to the table.

A tremendous thanks to committee and board members for their continued hard work and commitment to OSS and our students. In the spirit of the Charles Morgan, sail on OSS!

Sarah Herman, Head of School

It is a joy to reflect on my first year as Head of Our Sisters’ School. It has been, and continues to be, a privilege to work with the OSS community. Our combined efforts polish the sparkling “jewel” that OSS represents.

At our 8th grade promotion ceremony in June, I spoke about the idea that an open mind and a positive attitude can help soothe the often-troubled waters of transition. I am grateful to all for rallying their support and ensuring a smooth leadership transition for our continued success.

This past year was one of trust and steady progress:

- In the classrooms we looked at academic instruction, curriculum and school culture, and made challenging shifts with the best interests of our students in mind.
- Our focus on school culture motivated us to take bold and exciting risks such as taking our 7th and 8th graders to Driftwood Leadership Camp in early September to set the tone for the year.
- We launched a program with the Community Boating Center to put all our students into sailboats in our fall and spring terms, where they learned about the natural environment around them, the challenges and opportunities associated with teamwork, and their historical connection to New Bedford.
- When not in boats, all our students attended weekly science workshops led by excellent instructors at the Ocean Exploratorium and deepened their understanding of their marine environment.
- Under the supervision of coaches from Facing History and Ourselves, we overhauled our humanities curriculum.
- Board members and donors were energized and volunteers were energizing.
- We had an excellent fund-raising season.

These are examples of initiatives that required unfathomable quantities of trust and cooperation from staff, students and parents. These undertakings, along with the remarkable outcomes of our alumnas, help illustrate our steady progress toward an evermore effective school.

This year we proudly sent our graduates to excellent local high schools and to attend fully funded top-tier independent schools including St. Andrew’s and Milton Academy. We are so proud of all our graduates and enjoy watching them bloom, each at a school thoughtfully selected to match their needs and interests. Naturally, we are eager to see how far we can bring our current students as they energetically follow in the footsteps of their capable predecessors.

It is amazing to be part of a school so successfully dependent on volunteer participation: parents attend monthly meetings and events in formidable numbers, guests do presentations as part of our Morning Speaker series, volunteer coaches, academic tutors and language teachers bring their expertise and patience. Board members roll up their sleeves to help with everything from fundraising to moving library shelves. I say “Thank You” all day long and mean it!

Teachers, staff and volunteers work tirelessly and I applaud and appreciate their trust and participation. OSS is living proof of the awesome power of an all girls learning environment. Please read the alumnas pages included in this report and enjoy very thoughtful reflections. You too will feel that your support for the OSS mission is well-placed. If you haven’t been by to see us recently, we certainly do hope you will sail by soon!
33% of our graduates attend independent schools with full academic scholarships.

52% of alumnæ attend vocational schools.

15% of our graduates attend independent schools with full academic scholarships.

Bishop Stang High School*
Bristol County Agricultural High School
Fairhaven High School
Falmouth Academy*
Lincoln School*
Masters Regional Academy*
Milton Academy*
New Bedford Public High School
New Bedford Vocational Technical School
Old Rochester Regional High School
Phillips Academy Andover*
St. Andrew’s School*
St. George’s School*
Tabor Academy*
The Wheeler School*

* All graduates attending independent schools were awarded full academic scholarships.

Alumnae: Where are they now?

One of our graduates is attending Bristol County Agricultural High School to follow her dream of working with animals.

52% of alumnæ attend vocational schools.

The Annual Attitude of Gratitude Alumnae Dinner was attended by 94% of the alumnae on November 25, 2013.

Fast Facts about OSS Alumnae

- For the first time since OSS was founded in 2008 we have ten alumnæ in their senior year of high school. This memorable group graduated from OSS in June 2011. All of the girls are planning to apply to college this year.
- CarolAnne Gathers is one of the best welders in her metal fabrication shop. She recently noted that as a result of her education at OSS, “I view everything as an opportunity not a problem.”
- Krystal Argueta writes: “Got highest honors on my report card this quarter! Woot woot!”
- 2013 graduates include Trinity Montero at Tabor Academy, and Shaelyn Yopp at Falmouth Academy. Both enjoy rigorous academics and bring diversity to their schools. Trinity is on the dance team, participates in drama productions and has started a poetry club. Shaelyn plays basketball and volunteers with the admissions office.
- Ronnie Mak joins her sister at Wheeler, performing in the bell choir. They traveled to Colorado to perform last year.
- When asked how OSS has contributed to their success, one replied, “I look at everything with a positive outlook.”
- Another said, “OSS taught me how to manage my time so I can study and socialize.”
- Elena Bartolomey, Jael Costa, Kaylee Pereira, and Taeya DaSilva all commented recently that they felt very well-prepared for the academics at Voc-Tech. “OSS helped me have a better understanding” and that is why school seems easy, one freshman commented.

Fast Facts

33% attend independent schools
52% attend vocational schools
15% attend public schools

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Masters Regional Academy*
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Phillips Academy Andover*
St. Andrew’s School*
St. George’s School*
Tabor Academy*
The Wheeler School*

* All graduates attending independent schools were awarded full academic scholarships.
Our thanks go to our many volunteers:

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Advancement Committee
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Joe Alvord
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Kerry Cruz
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Linda DePina
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Kiana Fonseca '13
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Albert Fortes
Gail Fortes
Kim Francis
Vanessa Franklin
Hannah Freedman
Stanna Freeman '12
Jill French
Robert Gallo
Carolann Gathers '12
Lynne Greath '13
Edward Goldberg
Pat Gomes
Adam Gonsalves
Jayneth Gonzalez '13
Maude Gorman
Rose Grant
Nancy Griswold
Reilly Harrington
Ann Healy
Gabrielle Healy
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Rhianna Waterman
Marge Waite
Sarah Aikman

Friends Academy
GiftsToGive, Inc.

Our Community Partners:

Alma del Mar Charter School
Baker Books
Bishop Stang High School
Boys & Girls Club of Greater New Bedford
Bristol Community College
Butterwood Park Zoological Society
Child & Family Services, Inc.
Community Coating Center, Inc.
Community Foundation of Southeastern MA
Cutchunk Ferry Company
CVS Caremark Charitable Trust
Dartmouth Public Schools
Friends Academy
Falmouth Academy
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Kim Francis & Carlos Cardoso
Friends Academy
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Great Hill Blue Cheese
Suzan Greenup
Nancy Griswold
Sarah Harrison
Janice Hess
Nancy & Walds Howland
Lauren & Jamie Kitt
Larry Langford
Lisa Lebret
Paul Leconte

Global Learning Charter Public School
Greater New Bedford Regional Vocational Technical High School
Immigrants Assistance Center, Inc.
Junior Achievement of Southern MA
Lloyd Center for the Environment
Marion Institute
Nativity Preparatory School of New Bedford
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Dawn Lopes
Lynne & John Markey
Arlene & James McNamara
Kelli McSweeney
Teresa Mozia
New Bedford Symphony Orchestra
Noquochoque Orchards
Not Your Average Joe’s
June Pina
Mia Pina

Our thanks go to our many volunteers:

Christina Ackah
Stacey & Jay Avila
Luis Bartolomey
Bay Club at Mattapoisett
Jacqueline & John Beaufregard
DeeDee Bentley
Wendy & Larry Bidstrup
Joan Blanchard
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David Cornell fishing
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OUR DEEPEST THANKS TO ALL SUPPORTERS WHO BELIEVE IN OUR SCHOOL, STUDENTS, COMMUNITY AND OUR MISSION WHO CONTRIBUTED IN JULY 1, 2013 TO JUNE 30, 2014.

Please accept our apologies! Every effort has been made to make this donor report complete and correct.

Thank you.

Please accept our apologies! Every effort has been made to make this donor report complete and correct.

Thank you.
OSS Financial Summary

Thanks to the generosity of our supporters, community partners and friends, Our Sisters’ School has stayed the course through Fiscal Year 2014. We invested 86 percent of dollars-raised directly into our program expenses. We thank each of you for your dedication to our school, community and program. As the OSS voyage proceeds, we are committed to giving our students the promise of a full four-year education at the School. Toward that end, we have been fortunate this year to be able to grow our Sustainability Fund... all thanks to the loyalty and generosity of every one of you.

What WE RAISED:
- Program Expenses: 86%
- General Administration: 8%
- Fundraising: 6%

What WE SPENT:
- Program Expenses: 86%
- General Administration: 8%

Individually:
- Individuals: 75%
- Foundations: 24%
- OSS families: 1%

Funds raised over our fiscal budget are designated to our Sustainability Fund to ensure the long-term viability of the School.

“Our Sisters’ School has taught me a great deal about how to make a difference in the community whether it’s through community service or creating art in any shape or form.”

Meaghan ’14, student at Fairhaven High School

[Image of the financial summary chart]
Looking Ahead – School Year 2014-2015
Building on the wonderful results of last year, we’re off to a great start with the first term already complete, and 2014-2015 promises to be another strong year.

Chromebooks are here
In September 2013, we began a campaign to upgrade our school-wide technology resources. Thanks to our wonderful donors, every student now can work on a Chromebook! This has already proven to be a great asset to the girls for all facets of their learning experience.

New staff members
Georgiana Goulding joined OSS as Director of Advancement. After a 20-year corporate career in New York City, Georgia opted for the non-profit world. She did development work at a Connecticut social services agency, The Hotchkiss School and at UMass Dartmouth.

Dawn Lopes and Victoria Wood made the transition from dedicated volunteers last year to AmeriCorps Volunteers. Ms. Lopes teaches Creative Writing and manages the Science Out Of The Classroom Activities. Ms. Wood teaches all sections of Health and will coordinate the fitness and wellness programs. Both teach world languages and participate in many other activities.

Viennia Lopes-Booth leads the math department this year. She’s a graduate of Ithaca College and taught at the Wheeler School for several years where she also coached field hockey.

John Sargent hails from Connecticut and New York. He is a seasoned history teacher at both the middle and secondary school levels. He has experience as a writer as well. He leads our Humanities Team and coaches tennis and public speaking. He and Elena Maker, another new teacher in the Humanities Department, both attended Brown University. Ms. Maker teaches public speaking, and coaches soccer and other sports.

Jane Pucello, a retired math teacher from Tabor Academy, joins us as a Remediation Specialist. Ms. Pucello has been a dedicated tutor for several years and brings additional experience to the OSS math department.

Full STEAM Ahead with New Classes
Turning raw ideas and raw materials into finished works...Transforming thoughts and feelings into words and poems...Conveying information and authority with voices and gestures. As part of our ongoing effort to expand the educational horizons of OSS students, we have added three new courses to the curriculum for the 2014-2015 school year: Construction, Creative Writing, and Stand & Deliver.

Creative Writing is an important part of our curriculum. Dawn Lopes, a spoken word artist, is teaching this course with a focus on performance poetry. She is encouraging her students to express themselves in a freer and more personal voice than they would use for expository or critical writing in history or English.

Stand & Deliver is our new public speaking course. Students practice oral presentations and are guided through the practice of giving and receiving constructive criticism. At the end of each semester, one student from each grade will deliver a team presentation on a topic that has been researched and presented during those months. Elena Maker, Victoria Wood and John Sargent teach this class.

Media Technology Internship for OSS Alum
High School Junior Jaeliana Ortega has been offered an unpaid internship at Our Sisters’ School to assist with media technology. She is in the information technology shop at Voc-Tech and will be able to apply her skills in this area and help OSS work on the website upgrade.

Experiential Learning: OSS adds Internships for Students
This year a few hard-working, consistently responsible students have the opportunity to intern at various locations where they can learn through hands-on experiences. Some of the organizations participating in the internship program include the New Bedford Whaling Museum, Buttonwood Park Zoo, the YWCA, the Immigrants’ Assistance Center, and the Lloyd Center. There are currently thirteen students participating in the internship program.
Students learn to sail during their weekly class with Community Boating. Navigating the waters of New Bedford as a team, they apply concepts of angles, wind speed, and current. Experiential learning is here at OSS.

Why Our Sisters?
During New Bedford’s storied past, it was not uncommon for young wives to join husbands on extended whaling voyages. These brave young women were known as “Sister Sailors” and in their way they were seeking then, on the oceans of the world, precisely what the brave young “sisters” of New Bedford are seeking today, in the classrooms of tomorrow: to sail beyond familiar horizons, into unknown oceans of adventure and possibility, of growth and learning and accomplishment. Our sisters then, our sisters today, and a whole world waiting....
Thank You…
for your generous support. Your gift makes everything possible for our girls.
We invite you to come tour our school, or contact Georgie Goulding, Director of Advancement, at
508.994.1255 or ggoulding@oursistersschool.org to discuss the different ways that you can help Our Sisters’ School.

To continue providing opportunities and a transformative education for our students,
please make your gift today by visiting oursistersschool.org.

Save The Date!
Doris Kearns Goodwin
at River Rock Farm
Westport, MA
Sunday, July 26, 2015