

Voyages



*Our sisters then, our sisters today.
And a whole world waiting ...*

And They're Off - OSS Graduates First Class

A wonderful celebration honoring the first graduating class of Our Sisters' School took place at the New Bedford Whaling Museum on June 15, 2011. It was an evening filled with joy, tears, success and inspiration as the ten eighth-graders -- wearing white dresses, flowers and proud smiles -- became the very first graduates of Our Sisters' School. The museum's Cook Theatre was filled with families, friends and Board members, all gathered to support the achievement and success of these remarkable young women. Said Executive Director Lisa Yates: "This momentous occasion launches the first class of OSS graduates onto the next leg of their voyage. With gratitude, pride and belief in themselves, these young women are prepared to help create a bright future for our entire community."



Many of the graduates addressed the crowd, sharing their stories, triumphs and experiences at OSS. "This year has been one that I will never forget," said graduate Samantha Chan, who entered Tabor Academy this fall. "As we go on our separate paths, I know that no matter how many miles apart we are...we will always be sisters."

Arianna Mello, a freshman at Phillips Academy in Andover, called Our Sisters' School "one of the best middle school experiences a girl could have...I have spent many nights staying up late to finish homework, but I feel as if our heavy workload has prepared me for whatever lies ahead in high school."

Nepherterrie Pierre, a freshman at Bishop Stang, said: "I have changed in many ways at OSS. I started shy and not wanting to interact with anyone. Since then, I have introduced Greg Mortenson at the Zeiterion, participated in the Rotch-Jones-Duff House poetry readings and have presented before the entire school."

Adapted from Standard Times article written by Lauren Daley. Picture taken by Standard Times.

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*Dear Friends of Our Sisters' School,
We are pleased to share with you the following exciting activities happening at the school during the first part of the 2011-2012 school year, what is on the horizon and the many ways you can become involved.*

We send a special thank you to all the members of our crew: staff, families, students, volunteers and community partners. Your dedication and support of our voyage makes for a vibrant and successful journey.

*Sincerely,
Lisa Yates, Executive Director
Our Sisters' School*

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MESSAGE FROM THE BOARD

On behalf of the Board of Trustees, I want to thank everyone for the extraordinary support shown to Our Sisters' School over the past year. Whether you have volunteered your time, your wisdom or your financial resources, YOU are the reason the school continues to offer an expansive and excellent educational opportunity to the deserving girls of New Bedford.

Much growth has happened over the past four years. In 2011, we saw our first graduating class head off to an impressive slate of secondary schools. It is also gratifying that so many of the girls have come back to visit, demonstrating that OSS is their true extended home -- a safe haven of trusted and nurturing staff and friends. Our Finance Committee continues to work vigilantly to make sure our operating budget of \$800,000 reflects our size and is also sustainable over time, with 88 percent of every dollar raised going into programming for our students.

We have added an Advisory Council of over thirty ambassadors and advocates for the school. Our generous anonymous angel has allowed us to take "the match" and start building a sustainability fund that has grown over the past few years because of our ability to raise our operating budget through the kindness of many individuals and several grants.

Single-sex education is a powerful way to increase opportunities for women and break the cycle of poverty. As Anna Pollina, head of school at Westover, an all-girls school in Connecticut, said in a recent speech: "We are a girls' school by intention. It is not the absence of boys that defines us. It is the celebration of girls."

Today, OSS celebrates its students as well as its community, of which you are all a vital part. Please come visit us -- for a first or second or even a tenth time! The atmosphere is always effervescent and the hope is always incandescent.

*Lisa Schmid Alvord, President
OSS Board of Trustees*

VOLUNTEERISM AT ITS FINEST: ENDEAVOR SCHOLARS GIVE BACK TO OSS



This fall Our Sisters' School was honored to have three recipients of the Endeavor Scholarship, a four-year merit based award, at UMASS Dartmouth as part of our broad network of over 150 active volunteers. This award for new first-year students, covers tuition, mandatory fees, and room and board. Endeavor scholars take part in a leadership-training program and spend 90 hours a semester giving service to many local organizations. OSS is grateful for all the energy and dedication these volunteers have added to our ever-growing volunteer base.

"The students from UMass Dartmouth participating in the Endeavor program have been an invaluable asset to our school community," says Hillary Parker, the Volunteer Coordinator at OSS. "They have been willing to work on any project we have given them with enthusiasm, efficiency and passion for what we are trying to achieve for our students." Endeavor Scholar Victoria says, "Since I started volunteering in September, I have formed a special bond with the girls at OSS as well as the incredibly friendly staff. Helping out at the school has allowed me to give back to the community and become a part of something I truly believe in--the advancement of women in our society."

And They're Off, continued

Last September, the graduates began the next leg of their journey at the following schools: Bishop Stang High School, Greater New Bedford Regional Vocational-Technical High School, Lincoln School, Phillips Academy Andover, St. George's School, Tabor Academy and The Wheeler School. We continue to follow them as they adapt to their new schools and lives within their communities. Many

have already come back to OSS to share their experiences, talk with the current 8th graders and visit with teachers and mentors.

Nepherterrie recently visited and was gleaming with pride as she told us how her "lab report in science class was used as an example report and was showcased to the entire class." Way to go, Nepherterrie! During a

recent alumnae gathering over the holiday vacation, Irene reflected with her classmates on her first semester at St. George's School: "High school has been many things at once," she said. "But with the skills I gained at OSS, I have been able to handle these tasks and focus on the fun parts of high school I was told would be waiting for us. Thank you, OSS!"

Science: Partnering in a voyage of discovery

Our Sisters' School has an important alliance of community partners to help expand the awareness of our students about topics and careers in the STEM fields (Science, Technology, Engineering & Math).

The Ocean Explorium at the New Bedford Seaport annually celebrates GIRLS (Girls Interested in Real Life Science) during the month of March, sponsored by the Women's Fund at CFSEMA. Local women scientists and engineers speak on topics of interest in our area and also discuss what helped to shape their education and careers. OSS students help introduce the members and highlight these women's important contributions to furthering local scientific knowledge. In addition, students have been out on the EnviroLab vessel, giving them exposure to hands-on science in their own backyard.

With the Lloyd Center for the Environment, OSS students explore in-depth topics on the environment both in the classroom and on specialized outings to the facility in Dartmouth. The Lloyd Center focuses on the South Coast area to educate the public about



coastal and watershed issues, and conducts research on coastal ecosystems and endangered species. The Center has also provided the school with numerous hands-on models for the classroom, including a terrarium, an aquarium and an earthquake simulator.

At Greater New Bedford Vocational Tech, faculty from the Engineering Technology Cluster sponsored a 7th grade robotics day field trip. GNBVT, in addition to being one of the

schools our alums attend, is a regional leader and award winner in high-school robotics contests. The girls benefitted from a first-class demonstration on how the power of computers, motors and sensors can assist humans in difficult work.

At Bristol Community College, OSS science and math teachers participated in a one-day training session to build underwater remote-operated vehicles. These units are simpler versions of the type that helped seal the oil blowout in the Gulf of Mexico after the Deepwater Horizon Oil Spill. The units can be built from everyday materials and the electronics are provided through the school.

Our science teachers use the lessons to teach concepts like buoyancy and thrust. The training also encourages the use of hand tools; a big confidence booster for our students.

Many thanks to our community partners and volunteer curriculum committee for establishing such an incredible program for our students.

LOCAL EVENTS WAVE THE FLAG FOR OUR SISTERS' SCHOOL

A heartfelt thanks to Jono and Sue Billings of Cuttyhunk Ferry Company for a fantastic Boat Cruise in July. A night filled with beauty, history and great friends. Thank you, Arthur Motta, for your informative commentary on our local history! Late July brought Pulitzer Prize-winning historian Doris Kearns Goodwin to River Rock Farm in Westport for an empowering evening on behalf of OSS. A captivating speech, gorgeous surroundings with food and hospitality coordinated by the talented Wendy Joblon of Folia brought many communities together for an educational and inspirational event. To the Hitch's and Westphal's, thank you for hosting a fantastic cocktail party to share the story of OSS before Hurricane Irene landed on the south coast. In November, John Vasconcellos and Bill Barr graciously entertained and introduced new friends from the Greater New Bedford Community to OSS.

Many thanks to our loyal supporters, volunteers, and community partners for all you have done for OSS. If you are interested in supporting Our Sisters' School or if you have any questions, please contact Abby Keene, Director of Development at akeene@oursistersschool.org.



Our Sisters' School students speak with Doris Kearns Goodwin at a fundraiser at River Rock Farm in Westport.
Photo credit: Lauren Daley/Standard-Times special

New Crew Members at OSS

OSS thanks our returning AmeriCorps teachers for a fantastic 2010-2011 school year, and welcomes to the “crew” three new AmeriCorps teachers. In addition, we are excited to have Mary Wayss stepping up as our Visual & Performing Arts Department Coordinator while continuing to teach visual art, and Diana Puccio as our new Dance Teacher, adding dance to her weekly routine of drama classes at OSS. Abby Keene, Director of Development, is also a new addition to the crew. Welcome aboard, everyone.

Community Members Join the Board of Trustees

The OSS Board of Trustees would like to welcome Bunny Hickey, Peg McGetrick, John Vasconcellos and Russ Weigel to their crew and to thank Ron Teachman and Andy Rodin for their service to OSS.

Bunny Hickey joins the board after 3 years as OSS’s Director of Development. She looks forward to continuing her work with the school and commuting less. Her commitment to OSS, community connections and passion for the school provide valuable assistance in the areas of Advancement and Secondary School programming.

Peg McGetrick is a Founding Partner of Liberty Square Asset Management and a Director of Grantham, Mayo, Van Otterloo & Co (GMO). She is also on the investment committees for Partners Healthcare and Providence College.



John Vasconcellos, a New Bedford native, is the Southeast Regional Director with The Trustees of Reservations. John also serves on the boards of LifeStream and the Marion Institute as well as the Grants Committee of the New Bedford Education Foundation.

Russ Weigel is a former Peace Corps volunteer, professor and head of school at Loomis Chaffee in Windsor, CT, who retired to Dartmouth in 2008. During the last few years, Russ and his wife Jane have worked together as an educational-consulting team, most notably in launching new programs in visual arts and design at high schools in Doha, Qatar.

New OSS AmeriCorps Volunteer Classroom Teachers 2011-2012

Kara Gonnerman is from Saint Louis, MO. She graduated from the College of the Holy Cross in 2011, where she majored in history. In college, Kara played field hockey and loves high ropes courses. She was a summer camp counselor and loves being outdoors. She is excited to be having a new adventure at OSS, where she is teaching 8th-grade English and Social Studies.

Katie O’Hara is from Norwell, MA. She went to Norwell High School and graduated from Saint Anselm College in 2011, where she majored in Sociology. Katie played lacrosse at Saint Anselm and was involved in many volunteer roles -- such as working at a special needs camp and at an elementary school in Manchester, NH. She also loves to be active and is the new 5th-grade Math and Science teacher at OSS!

Maria Sayed is a first-year teacher at OSS for 6th-grade English/Language Arts and Social Studies. She is originally from Waterbury, CT. Maria attended the University of Connecticut, where she was both a Research and Resident Assistant. She graduated from UConn in 2010 with a B.A. in Psychology and a minor in Women’s Studies.

Change of the Watch

Abby Keene is the new Director of Development at Our Sisters’ School. She graduated with a B.A. in Sociology with a minor in Women’s Studies from Gettysburg College. After working in Tabor Academy’s Alumni Office for six years, Abby is excited to share her fundraising experience, local knowledge, and passion with Our Sisters’ School.

A huge thank you to Esperanza Alejandro-Berubé, Andrew Bradley, Steph Cosantino, Marla Feldman, Bunny Hickey and Megan Thomas for your endless commitment and dedication to OSS. Best of luck on your new journeys!



CVS CAREMARK VISITS OUR SISTERS’ SCHOOL

In November 2011, OSS was honored to host a brown-bag lunch for CVS Caremark executives. During the lunch, a local CVS pharmacist addressed the school about her journey to becoming a pharmacist. She spoke of the many challenges she faced, as well as of the powerful mentors who helped make her dreams come true. Our Sisters’ School is grateful to CVS for believing in our school, our mission and our community.

OSS Advisory Council Kicks-Off

Our Sisters' School is excited to announce the development of our Advisory Council in August 2011. We are thrilled to have over thirty members acting as ambassadors for the school. Our Council members represent a vast variety of experience, networks and local communities. Many thanks to the committee members for spreading the word about OSS.

ADVISORY COUNCIL MEMBERS:

Joel Alvord	Darlene Jordan	Christy Pennoyer
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Stewart Forbes	Wally Nichols	Sylvia Westphal
Linda Hobbs	Jonathan O'Brien	
Donna Jeffers	Celeste Penney	

LEARNING IS FUN!



Advancement News

"Another Mile, Another Starfish"

Pedals On by Jessie Cherofsky



On January 1st, 2011, Stephanie Cosantino (a former AmeriCorps teacher at OSS) and I decided to bicycle some 5,000 miles from Anchorage, Alaska, to New Orleans, Louisiana, to fund-raise for OSS. As I write this it is Day 169 of our journey and we've ridden approximately 2,600 miles through Alaska, the Yukon Territory, British Columbia, Washington, Oregon, and most of the California coast. On this journey we've shared with many people about OSS, the incredible work its staff, faculty, board, families, and community members do and the inspiring passion and success of its students and alums. Frequently, people have stopped to tell us about their own concerns and experiences with education, and several times they have handed us money to send off to OSS, proud to contribute to a school that is really making a difference.

Our goal for this trip was to raise money for OSS and travel and learn about the country. But the type of education we are receiving is not something we could have predicted, nor is it something we can sum up briefly. We are so grateful for this opportunity to travel in OSS's name and remain a part of the community despite our distance. To visit our trip website, read our blog and see our photos, go to: www.anothermileanotherstarfish.com. We'd love to hear from you!

SUMMER IS JUST AROUND THE CORNER

We have been so grateful for the many programs our students have been involved with during past summers, including the Summer Stars Program, United Way Camperships and Trips for Kids, just to name a few. We would be interested to hear of any additional opportunities you may know of for the coming summer. Music, art, sports, cooking, sailing...whatever it may be, OSS students are eager to learn...more. Please contact Jill Howard at jhoward@oursistersschool.org.



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Join the Crew - Volunteer at OSS!

OSS seeks volunteers to support our program for the 2011-2012 school year.

- Evening Study Tutors
- Office Reception
- Administrative Support
- World Language Tutors
- Music Mentors
- After School Athletic Coaches

For additional opportunities and full descriptions, visit our volunteer page www.oursistersschool.org/html/volunteer.html or contact Hillary Parker at hparker@oursistersschool.org or 508-994-1255x 306.