Dear Families, Students, and Community Members of Our Sisters’ School,

Graduation 2014 - We are so proud of our graduates! With four years of challenging studies, full school days, enrichment classes, and adventurous excursions behind them, they are prepared for the next steps along their educational journeys. Congratulations to the students, their families, and their teachers.

It’s been a year of transition for the school as well. Our change of leadership has been both seamless and invigorating. Sarah Herman is accomplishing her goal of “polishing the jewel.” Her passion for education and commitment to our mission is palpable. With Ms. Herman at the helm, Our Sisters’ School continues to flourish and her focus on community and teamwork is clear. We are indeed a community school. All of you are part of our community. Whether you volunteer your time or generously donate, the Board is continually humbled by your commitment to OSS. With the proliferation of charter schools in New Bedford, it is important to remind ourselves about what makes OSS unique: we educate girls with the belief that when you educate a girl, you not only educate the student, but her family and the community as well. An arcane Massachusetts state law prohibits public funding of single sex schools, so consequently, we receive no money from the state. We rely on the community - and the community is you.

Come visit us - experience the exuberant atmosphere, the joy of learning, and the commitment to education that we embody. It is, after all, your school. You make it possible.

Sincerely, Lisa Schmid Alvord, President, OSS Board of Directors

When the CHARLES W. MORGAN Sails into New Bedford, OSS will be Aboard!

With contributions from OSS Alumnae Kianna Fonseca, Jesley Ortiz and Lynea Gilreath

The CHARLES W. MORGAN will sail into New Bedford Harbor from Vineyard Haven on the 25th of June, and our veteran art teacher, Mary Wayss, will be aboard. The wooden whale ship, the last of its kind, recently restored to her former glory, will be sailing her 38th voyage that includes visiting her original port of New Bedford.

Several months ago Ms. Wayss competed with about 300 other applicants to become a “38th Voyager.” Each applicant was encouraged to propose an idea that would aid the Mystic Seaport Museum in documenting the monumental 38th voyage of the ship, and create materials for the museum to share through exhibits, publications and programs. Ms. Wayss’ aims to use her experience on the ship “to create exciting lesson plans for a thematic unit for art teachers, and to create scrimshaw motifs in other mediums such as mammal bones, printmaking, sketching, photography, and pen and ink drawings to go with the educational unit for art education,” Ms. Wayss told OSS alumnae.

Ms. Wayss’ art unit will focus on the theme of Risk and Collaboration. The overarching question is “What do you consider a risk? Whalers encountered many risks and so do artists,” she said. Her narrative artwork will capture this historic voyage and the essence of whaling, the juxtaposition between sailing now and sailing then, creating art over a hundred years ago and today.

She is also very enthusiastic about the opportunity to explore her own personal history in the shipping community. “It started with my great-grandfather. His family owned a shipping company based out of Fail, Azores, and was hired by the British to ship cargo to their armies all over the world,” Ms. Wayss told students. Inspired by her own heritage and the sea, her work aboard the CHARLES W. MORGAN promises to be inspirational to both OSS students and the greater Southcoast community – and beyond our boundaries to the arts community in general.

Ms. Wayss joined the staff at OSS when the school opened its doors in August 2008. Since then she has been the art teacher for each and every OSS student. “I graduated from UMASS Boston with Bachelor of Arts in 1998 and received a Masters in Art Education in 2007 from Lesley University,” Wayss said. We congratulate Ms. Wayss as she proudly represents OSS on this historic voyage!
Reflections from Our Head of School

If I close my eyes and rewound the last 10 months of life at Our Sisters’ School, a colorful blur of images whizz across the screen of my eyelids. I see the building in a state of disarray as we expanded in size, and remember the feeling that we would never be ready to welcome students on the first day of school. I see the mess of my office shift only slightly throughout the year as I tried to remain focused on the most important work - students’ academic progress and their personal growth. I see students literally grow in height and maturity, I see parents come to understand my intentions, teachers support one another and challenge themselves, and volunteers stand strong through thick and thin as they sustain the growth of the school. I see and hear and feel more than I could possibly record, and am left in a sincere state of awe. This has been an awesome year, and I thank everyone who has had a hand in any aspect of the work!

I can’t count the number of times I have referenced the idea that “it takes a village” to raise a child. In this case, I see Our Sisters’ School as the child, and see that we have worked together all year to guide this “child” through yet one more powerful year of growth. This collaborative effort fuels my work and it is exciting to anticipate where next year will take us.

My affection for the word “community” is no secret, and with a knowing smile I stand by my appreciation for the word and all it represents. We have worked hard this year to build community and I know that we still have a long way to go both within the school and in terms of outreach. My goals for next year are specific: I want to continue improving the quality of our program and ensure that Our Sisters’ School continues to grow into a place where girls can grow intellectually and interpersonally. I also want to hone the OSS message and reach out to the children, families and community members who are eager to join OSS either as a student, parent, volunteer or supporter. I want to ensure that our message is clear: we exist to offer the children, families and community members who are eager to join OSS either as a student, parent, volunteer or supporter. I want to ensure that our message is clear: we exist to offer opportunities to eager, motivated, hard working girls capable of rigorous academics who want to better themselves, their futures and their communities.

Thank you again for all you have done and continue to do for OSS. It is a pleasure to join everyone in teamwork. – Sarah Herman

Mark Your Calendars

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Dates</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>OSS Class of 2014 Promotion Ceremony</td>
<td>June 18, 2014</td>
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<tr>
<td>OSS Class of 2014 Promotion Ceremony, 6:00 PM tickets by request</td>
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<tr>
<td>Last Day of School</td>
<td>June 20, 2014</td>
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<tr>
<td>Grades 7 and 8 to Camp Driftwood</td>
<td>August 18, 2014</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Classes Resume</td>
<td>August 21, 2014</td>
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For more information please call the school at 508-994-1255.

Gatherings continue as a whole school has been an important part of our school day since we opened our doors in 2008. What started as a Morning Meeting, gathering daily at 7:45 for 15 to 30 minutes, has evolved to a new level this year with Sarah Herman’s leadership.

Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays the whole school meets together in the community room at about 11:00 AM; a raised hand signals silence and the meeting begins. The agenda changes with the priorities of the day, but regular appearances come in the form of Birthday Acknowledgments, Calendar Notes, Student of the Month Awards, and sometimes a surprise or a speaker.

Often we begin with an inspirational message on a colorful slide, which has earned the nickname “Food for Thought.” Weekly Geography Quiz questions, historical fact questions, and even a weekly “NewsFlash Bulletin” about interesting current events in the news can make these Community Meetings lively, thought provoking and educational.

A rowdy sing-a-long song, often led by 7th grader Emma Bruce, pictured above left with visiting banjo player Richard Herman (Sarah Herman’s father), can make the crowd smile and laugh – and sometimes cheer! As the meeting nears its close, Ms. Herman asks the community to comment on something positive that a community member has done, from cheering up a sad friend to helping someone with homework, or any other positive behavior. The fortunate recipient is sent “Shooting Stars” from everyone in the room.

What are Shooting Stars? Instead of applause, fingers wave at the honored one and a “sshhhhh” sound fills the air as the girl smiles and accepts the shooting stars and the compliment about her (pictured above right). The larger result is that everyone in the room is thinking positive thoughts about someone or something. Positive energy is in the air! The room becomes quiet, then silent, and one honored student or staff member is chosen to ring the school bell. The tone is delightful.

Come and join us some time – you are part of our community!
The Growth of The Chatterbox

English teacher Shana Silva and student Meaghan Rose Grant write poetry outside on a lovely spring day.

What was planted as the seed of an idea for a club activity in 2012 has blossomed into an interactive learning experience for those involved in English teacher Shana Silva’s Visiting Writers Workshop. They meet here at OSS every Wednesday afternoon.

Inspired by many published authors this year, the students started the first student-run publication, aptly called The Chatterbox. Sent out to the email list and published here monthly, each edition includes students’ poetry, prose, artwork and some news stories. It’s informative and fun—two of the reasons why writers write. The OSS community loves it.

The idea started with 8th grader, Meaghan Rose Grant. “I read the book Struck by Lightning, by Scott Coffier, in an art hit the TV show Glee. It’s about how he started a school newspaper in his high school. He started the newspaper to get other kids involved in writing. This book inspired me to try something like that at OSS,” she said. She shared this idea with Ms. Silva at the end of her 7th grade year, and Silva agreed that the time was right to start a student publication.

Visiting Writers Workshop is one of the weekly afterschool club activities offered to the OSS students every Wednesday afternoon. This year about 15 students participated for at least one term. Students can rotate into other after school activities but some choose to remain in the same club all year. This personal and inclusive dynamic can rotate into other after school activities but some choose to remain about 15 students participated for at least one term. Students involved in English teacher Shana Silva’s Visiting Writers Workshop.

Most of the entries lately are poetry. In March visiting writer, Mr. Scott Blagden, connected with students. He wrote Dear Life, You Suck, a novel geared to young adults. Meaghan and a few other students had already read his book and really enjoyed hearing him talk about his life and work.

“Ms. Silva really makes me to push myself with my writing and allows me to be inspired by different things,” said Meaghan. Silva invites authors to come and tell the students about their experience as published authors, and this inspires students to write on their own and experiment with different techniques that the authors share with them. Meaghan plans to continue her involvement with the group as an alumnus next year while a freshman at Fairhaven High School.

Brave students like Meaghan Rose Grant inspire teachers like Shana Silva. “When I have writers come in, they present the kids with challenging prompts. Seeing those girls take on that challenge with confidence and smiles on their faces, makes me, as a teacher, feel so proud of them. Instead of complaining that it’s too hard, they take on the challenge with ease and confidence. I am so proud of their willingness to take a risk and share their writing with a visitor and with the group. I can see that they are all doing the very best that they can. I am so happy to see them all make such a genuine effort,” Ms. Silva said.

“I send The Chatterbox to Robert Barboza, the editor of the Dartmouth Chronicle,” said Silva. “One day he called and asked permission to publish Grant’s poem in the Chronicle. It made me realize the importance of the work we are doing here. Meaghan had two of her poems published this year and that was so inspiring,” she said.

Visiting Writers Workshop, she met with the group on April 2, 2014.

This time she brought examples of Dadaism, an abstract form of poetry created during the WWI era. Early twentieth century poets would take newspapers, cut out single words, put them into a bag, then choose poems at random and create a poem with them. Many of the poems look like silly nonsense, but as one student pointed out, “They were trying draw to attention to the senselessness of war.”

Creating their own nonsense poetry was fun for the OSS students to do in this workshop setting.

Student editor, Meaghan Rose Grant, has really enjoyed the experience of collaborating with Ms. Silva on The Chatterbox this year. “It gives the kids in Visiting Writers Workshop an opportunity to write as well as be creative,” said Grant. “And it’s a chance to publish the work they create in Visiting Writers Workshop,” added Ms. Silva.

“People make choices. Choices make history. Facing History and Ourselves provides ideas, methods, and tools that support the practical needs, and the spirits, of educators worldwide who share the goal of creating a better, more informed, and more thoughtful society.”

Considerable materials, support and guidance are available to teachers with the goal of developing students’ reading, writing, and thinking skills through the lens of conscience. Already used at many schools across the country and around the world, Facing History and Ourselves is sure to be a hit.

“What ignited Facing History and Ourselves in the beginning is still what guides us today: the educator’s most important responsibility—our gift to society—is to shape a humane, well-educated citizenry that practices civility and preserves human rights.”

Though rigorous investigation of the events that led to the Holocaust and other recent examples of genocide and mass violence, students in a Facing History class learn to choose knowledge over misinformation, compassion over prejudice or bullying, and participation over indifference or resignation. It’s active—rather than passive—learning.

The above information is taken from their website: to learn more, visit the website at www.facinghistory.org.

Three playful 8th graders will shed their Arts Festival masks and celebrate their successful completion of middle school during the traditional Promotion Ceremony. Held once again at the New Bedford Whaling Museum on June 18th, 2014. We are excited to welcome Mayor Jon Mitchell as a special guest speaker this year.

Looking Forward to Facing History

“Educating the mind without educating the heart is no education at all.” - Aristotle

September 2014 will bring a breath of fresh air to the heart of the social studies classes at Our Sisters’ School; we will be fully embracing the Facing History and Ourselves curriculum.

New Bedford’s First Woman Poet Laureate Inspires OSS

Patricia Gomes, the first woman to be the Poet Laureate of New Bedford, is a favorite writer of OSS students. A frequent visitor to the Visiting Writers Workshop, she met with the group on April 2, 2014.

This time she brought examples of Dadaism, an abstract form of poetry created during the WWI era. Early twentieth century poets would take newspapers, cut out single words, put them into a bag, then choose poems at random and create a poem with them. Many of the poems look like silly nonsense, but as one student pointed out, “They were trying draw to attention to the senselessness of war.”

Creating their own nonsense poetry was fun for the OSS students to do in this workshop setting.

On May 30th audiences were dazzled by a knockout performance of The Odyssey with a New Bedford twist. It was all part of the 3rd Annual Visual and Performing Arts festival that showcased the talents of student artists, musicians, actresses and dancers. The original adaptation of The Odyssey introduced the city’s first one-eyed whale! The production was written and directed by AmerCorps Volunteer theatre teacher Cindy Hartigan. Hats off to art teacher Mary Woyish for coordinating a spectacular evening. Don’t miss it next year!
The TeenInk.com Check it out!
status each quarter so far, and published five of her poems online at Wheeler.

Trinity Monteiro, a freshman at Tabor Academy, achieved Honor Roll

Jarynette Gonzalez, a junior at Lincoln School, was the lead in the winter musical 

Meet Me in St. Louis

• Early childhood education
• Dental assisting
• Nursing
• Drafting technology
• Digital visual design
• Metal fabrication and joining (welding)
• Electrical construction

Leading to certification or professional licensure in areas such as:

Of them have chosen their “shops” that include technical instruction leading to certification or professional licensure in areas such as:

18 OSS grads are studying at the Greater New Bedford Regional Vocational Technical High School. Some play on the soccer and basketball teams and are getting involved in many extracurricular activities. Some of them have chosen their “shops” that include technical instruction leading to certification or professional licensure in areas such as:

Samantha Chan, Tabor Academy junior, was named Captain of the Competitive Dance Team and Head Tour Guide for the Admissions Office.

Jarynette Gonzalez, a junior at Lincoln School, was the lead in the winter musical Meet Me in St. Louis.

Trinity Monteiro, a freshman at Tabor Academy, achieved Honor Roll status each quarter so far, and published five of her poems online at Teenlink.com. Check it out!

Wheeler School students, Carissa Mauk, a junior, and her sister Ronnie Mauk, a sophomore, are members of the Wheeler School Bell Choir. In March they traveled to Colorado with the bell choir to play for schools in the Denver area. In academic news, Carissa was awarded a certificate of achievement for excellence in mathematics and the natural sciences from the society of women engineers from the New England Shoreline Section, an award given to one junior boy and girl each year at Wheeler.

Ariana Mello, a junior at Phillips Andover Academy, has traveled to New York and Boston to visit colleges with her college advisory group. She rows on the Coif Varsity Crew and volunteers as a tour guide for the admissions office.

Irene Luperon, pictured left, a junior at St. George’s School, sailed aboard GERONIMO on the “Whale Sail” voyage to study humpback whales near the Dominican Republic with her science teacher and other students during her spring break. Irene was awarded the Conrad Young Prize for “contributing significantly to the school’s efforts to become a more diverse, respectful community through scholarship, leadership and character.”

Share your news with your friends in the OSS Community - just email Laurie Knight, Communications Director at lknight@oursistersschool.org.

MaBaCh 2014

Our Sisters’ School participated in the Math/Basketball/Chess Contest, better known as MaBaCh. Held in the gym at Bishop Stang High School, the Sisters’ School squad beat Esperanza School in basketball for the first time, and OSS won the Spirit Award once again.

Graduates, teachers and students were there to cheer them on. Great Team effort!

Volunteer Profile: Mrs. June Strunk

What would Our Sisters’ School be without volunteers like June Strunk?

Students at Our Sisters’ School benefit in so many ways from dedicated volunteers like “the other Miss June,” as she is affectionately called. When she helps in Ms. Wayss’ art classroom, it makes the teacher/student ratio in the classroom less than 9/1. Her patient and kind influence has inspired students and teachers alike.

“Volunteering should be personal. You want to feel like you are doing something useful,” June said wisely.

And useful she has become to both staff and students at OSS! Noticing the call for volunteers to manage after school clubs on Wednesday afternoons, she and her friend Edie Lauderdale started the very popular knitting club. The group gathers weekly for an hour where students learn to knit. “I think it’s really neat how students gain so much confidence from knitting,” she said.

Twenty-two girls have participated in the knitting club, and many have made it a serious hobby. Some knit throughout the school day, and you can find skeins of yarn and knitting needles in student lockers!

One parent recently thanked Mrs. Strunk for teaching her daughter how to knit, because now when she goes to her grandmother’s house, they sit and knit together. “Helping people like this is a very rewarding feeling,” said June.

If you would like to donate yarn or knitting items please contact the admission office at 508-994-1255.

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If you would like to donate yarn or knitting items, please contact the admission office at 508-994-1255. If you have a hobby that you would like to share with our students, please contact Betsy Lawrence, Volunteer Coordinator, blawrence@oursistersschool.org.

Get Involved! Be Happy! Volunteer at OSS!

Smooth Sailing for OSS Students at Community Boating

Ask a group of 5th graders what they love about Our Sisters’ School and the answer may surprise you.

“Community Boating makes me happy and makes me want to come to school,” said Liliana at lunch recently.

The 5th graders get to miss about 2 hours of regular classroom time in order to get out on the water once a week during the spring and fall terms at the Community Boating Center in New Bedford.

A special week of activities will be offered at CBC for OSS students from June 25 to July 2, just in time for the arrival of the CHARLES W MORGAN. They will have fun on the water sailing, kayaking, swimming, and even trying to row Yankee and Azorean whaleboats. They will also join the Pursuit for Courage race in both big and small boats on Saturday, June 28. On Sunday, June 29th, they plan to join the Parade of Boats and welcome the whale ship CHARLES W MORGAN back to New Bedford. A field trip to Fall River for a night on the Battleship and some sailing in their harbor is also a feature of this exciting week of summer camp activities at the Community Boating Center.

Experiences like this teach kids the basics about sailing and so much more, too. “I learned boat safety and manners like tacking and jibing,” said Isabelle.

“I learned the parts of the boat, and now I know more words when I read,” Isabela and Alayjah said.

“We learn to work together as a team. It helps us in school because we actually communicate and trust and respect each other more at school after being on the water together,” said Liliana.

“Communication is really just helping each other,” Madeline observed. “When kids go to CBC they feel positive and have a real purpose.”

**Photographs by Joan Blanchard Photography**
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...

The mission of Our Sisters’ School is to educate and inspire middle-school girls from the Greater New Bedford area to reach their full potential in a safe, supportive and challenging environment. Our Sisters’ School will provide a quality education and will welcome girls from diverse faiths, races and cultures to our unique learning environment.