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

I greet you warmly with this letter, and I look forward to seeing you in person whether in the hallways, at community events or through the extended OSS network.

There are so many reasons why I am excited to join you as Head of School: I am inspired by the commitment to community that is fundamental to OSS, punctuated by parent involvement and volunteerism. It is clear that the parents, students, teachers, staff, volunteers and board members associated with OSS demonstrate an exceptional commitment to learning and growth. Our school is poised to jump to yet another level of greatness.

Our Sisters’ School has already been shaped into a carefully carved jewel boasting remarkable student achievement. It is my intention to work with the entire school community to “polish the jewel” and decorate it with complimentary gems as we continue forward in our pursuit to provide each Sister Student with the high quality education she deserves.

I join you with joy in my heart,
Sarah Herman, Head of School

OUR SISTERS’ SCHOOL WELCOMES SARAH HERMAN, HEAD OF SCHOOL

It gives us great pleasure to welcome Sarah Herman as the second head of Our Sisters’ School as of July 1, 2013. Sarah’s appointment is the exciting culmination of an intensive search to find the next leader for OSS.

Sarah’s passion for educating girls, her commitment to diversity, and her strengths as an inspiring mentor brings excitement, energy and growth as the school kicks-off the 2013-2014 school year. Sarah has the necessary experience and endless energy to be a successful leader as we start our sixth school year. She speaks Spanish fluently and is also excited about becoming part of the New Bedford community.

Sarah Herman grew up in New Hampshire on the campus of Interlocken International, a well established program serving students from around the world and all walks of life with national and international experiential education programs. After college and extensive international travel, Sarah joined Teach For America and taught in the New York City public schools for 4 years. While teaching, she earned a full scholarship to attend Bank Street College and completed her MEd in Elementary Education. From 2002 to 2010, Sarah returned to NH to serve as Director of Interlocken International, where she managed both the New Hampshire summer camp and 12 international travel programs (including China, South Africa, Cuba and Mexico).

Since her tenure at Interlocken, Sarah has served as intern principal at the Boston public system, as interim principal of grades 7-9 at Community Charter School of Cambridge, as assistant principal in Lawrence, MA in the Turnaround Leadership Initiative, and earned a Masters degree in School Leadership from Harvard University. Since 2010 Sarah has served as President of the Board of the Educational Opportunities Fund and she is so pleased to join the team at Our Sisters’ School where she can continue her work with underserved populations in a school with a clear mission, a commitment to diversity and a student-centered approach to education.

The Board is grateful for the hard work of the Leadership Search Committee and for everyone who took part in the search process. Welcome aboard, Sarah!

Lisa Schmid Alvord
President, OSS Board of Trustees

INSIDE THIS ISSUE
- Changing of the Watch
- Inspiring Evening at the Whaling Museum
- Graduate Secondary School Enrollment
- Hybrid Instructional Model Hits the Classrooms
- Alumnae Highlight – Samantha Chan
- Academic Updates – New Initiatives at Our Sisters’ School
- Superior Summer for OSS Students
- Profile- Betsy Lawrence
- OSS Advancement News
- New to the Crew
- Join The Crew – Volunteer at Our Sisters’ School
On June 18 -- a lovely, almost-summer evening -- Our Sisters’ School held its third graduation ceremony in the Cook Memorial Theater at the Whaling Museum. As was true for the first and second graduating classes, this year’s eleven graduates compiled an impressive record of scholarship and achievement, with the result being acceptance at outstanding secondary schools, both near and far. One girl received a full scholarship to attend Phillips Exeter Academy in New Hampshire; two girls received full scholarships at Tabor and Falmouth academies. Six girls attend Greater New Bedford Vocational Tech -- a public school with competitive admissions -- and two go to New Bedford High School.

The proud graduates -- all dressed in white and displaying a variety of sensational hairdos -- filed into the crowded auditorium to the cheers of school mates, family members, teachers, staff members and OSS volunteers. Also present were loyal members of the two earlier graduating classes -- looking, as school head Lisa Yates put it, “senior and accomplished and gorgeous” -- along with several former AmeriCorps teachers who returned to New Bedford from locales around the country just to see “their” students graduate.

Board President Lisa Schmid Alvord welcomed the graduates and urged them to “always reach for the moon. If you don’t make it all the way, don’t worry … you will still be up in the stars....” Retiring board members Talbot Baker, Jr. and JoAnn Tschaen also addressed the girls. “Commencement is the proper name for this occasion,” asserted Tschaen. “For this ceremony is truly a beginning ... the first day of the rest of your lives.”

Then came the girls themselves, one by one, to address the large audience and to express their gratitude with poise, deep feeling and an infectious humor that quickly spread throughout the theater. The girls spoke of many things, but a common theme was discovery: “I found myself at OSS. I was many things when I arrived four years ago. Now I am my own true self.”

To conclude the ceremony, the OSS Chorus came forward to present a singing version of Maya Angelou’s famous poem, “I’ll Rise.” It’s final verse is as follows:

“Out of the shacks of history’s shame
Up from a past rooted in pain
I’ll rise
I’ll rise
I’ll rise"

That these inspiring girls have risen is clear. That they will keep rising -- along with their fellow alumnae, their teachers past and future, and indeed the entire OSS community -- seems equally so.
SUPERIOR SUMMER FOR OSS STUDENTS

Educational research supports the notion that students who participate in activities like summer camp retain considerably more of what they learn in school and return to school more enthusiastic and ready to learn compared to their peers who are less active during the long summer break (Making Summer Count, McCombs, Rand Education, 2011). Annually at Our Sisters’ School, we apply generous support to students wishing to go to summer camp but are unable to afford it. 56% of 5th graders, 92% of 6th graders, 83% of 7th graders, 69% of 8th graders, and 40% of our alumnae participated in summer programs with some form of assistance from Our Sisters’ School.

In addition, we had support from community partners such as the YMCA, who generously offered our students a 50% discount this summer, and Tabor Academy, who offered 12 fully subsidized weeks of day camp, allowing seven of our students to participate in their camp this summer for one to two weeks each, a $1,200 value. Kimball Union Academy sponsored one of our girls at their Girls Leadership Camp in August, a $1225 award. And one of our students won a $2,347 scholarship from the Educational Opportunities Fund to attend four weeks at the Windsor Mountain Camp this summer. Summer camp can be a transformative experience for young students, and our goal is to encourage and support these excellent learning opportunities.

One of the most popular camps among our students, a theatre camp called Summer Stars, was attended by eight OSS girls in August. Held at the Northfield Mount Herman School, this residential camp is completely free of charge to our students, thanks to generous donations and extensive fundraising by the Summer Stars organization and NMH.

Many of our girls were kept busy in local opportunities such as Trips for Kids, the Lloyd Center Programs, The RAPPP programs, YWCA, SEA Lab, Community Boating, and the Girls Scouts, too. Bishop Stang and UMass Dartmouth camps were also popular with our kids this summer, and these experiences could not be possible for these girls without the help of OSS supporters.

OSS continued to operate our in-house academic support program, “Drop-In Tutoring,” free of charge for all of our students to encourage reading and math activities during the summer. In all, we had 44 girls take part in at least one summer camp experience at one of 20 camps and summer programs. We are already looking forward to the summer of 2014!
Our first class of OSS graduates is entering 11th grade, their junior year. It is time for them to start thinking about colleges, and Samantha Chan is one OSS student who is leading the way. “I’m not sure what I want to do yet, but I know I want to do something creative," Sam told me recently when I visited her at Tabor Academy. She loves studio art and is taking Advanced Art this year. She won the prize for Excellence in Art when she was in 9th grade. She’s thinking of possibly majoring in business with a minor in art, as Ms. Wayss suggested when she visited OSS recently.

Samantha achieved excellence at Tabor during her sophomore year, earning High Honors each semester and receiving the prize for Excellence in Chinese II. “My family and I speak Fu-zhounese, a dialect of Chinese which is almost a dead language, so my parents encouraged me to take Chinese,” she explained. She went to China for three weeks this past summer as part of the Tabor Academy Foreign Language exchange program. She was able to hike part of the Great Wall and stayed with a Chinese family in Hangzhou for part of her trip. “It was an amazing experience! And now I want to travel the world whenever I can!”

“I love Tabor – everything about it is great!” she said. “When I was first at OSS, I never realized that it could lead me to this opportunity. I started to become aware of other schools when I went to a school fair and looked at summer camp options in 7th grade. I am so glad I’m here,” she said with a warm smile.

“Our Sisters’ School really prepared me for high school, especially US History. I think I still have my notes! I feel really confident in all of my classes,” Samantha told me. She is taking AP Chemistry, Pre-Calculus Honors, Chinese III Honors, English III, US History and Advanced Art.

She is also a member of the dance team in the fall and spring, and in the winter she is a third year member of the Model United Nations. “It’s so fun! We get to really argue,” and she noted that Tabor will be hosting a Model UN conference this winter.

Sam has lots of new friends from places like Thailand, China, Bridgewater, Providence, and Marion, but she still finds time for her friends from OSS. Trinity Monteiro is just starting as a freshman at Tabor, and Sam is looking out for her. “I’m so glad I can answer her questions. She seems to be doing really well.”

An admissions tour guide and a Global Partner, Sam is sure to have a lot to write on her college applications. Despite her demanding schedule, she plans to take the SAT this winter, and she hopes to join the rest of her OSS friends at a College Fair at UMass Dartmouth this month.

Our Sisters’ School graduates are really on their way to achieving great things!
**OSS ADVANCEMENT NEWS**

As a tuition-free school, Our Sisters’ School relies on the generosity of individual and foundation support to provide a safe, supportive and challenging environment for learning. 89% of funds raised go directly into our instructional and extracurricular programs; please help us continue to provide a rich academic experience by investing in Our Sisters’ School today!

- The MATCH continues! Support OSS before December 20th, 2013 and your gift will be matched by 50%. A gift of any size is special because every girl is special. If you have any questions about supporting OSS or if you would like to schedule a tour of the school, please contact Abby Magni at (508) 994-1255 or amagni@oursistersschool.org. For further information or to donate online, please visit www.oursistersschool.org.

- Many thanks to the Cuttyhunk Ferry Company for a delightful Boat Cruise. Once again we so enjoyed being aboard.

- Three cheers to Janie Coolidge, Debby Robbins, Ed Goldberg and Alice & Jon Flint for hosting such lovely evenings on behalf of Our Sisters’ School. OSS is grateful for the opportunity to share our voyage and success with many in such warm and welcoming environments.

- LIKE Our Sisters’ School on Facebook to see current happenings and events at OSS!

---

**HYBRID INSTRUCTIONAL MODEL HITS THE CLASSROOMS**

The launch of our 6th academic year at Our Sisters’ School brings with it a hybrid instructional model worthy of mention! As our OSS community is well aware, we depend on the generosity and capacity of AmeriCorps teachers to keep the wheels of our school turning. Originally all of our classroom teachers were AmeriCorps teachers and while this was exciting, it did not offer great stability for the school in terms of staffing or instructional capacity: AmeriCorps can only work for up to 2 years and have varying levels of teaching experience. Over time, OSS has evolved to boast a hybrid model combining AmeriCorps power with that of experienced and licensed classroom teachers who have committed to a career in teaching and working with young people.

Our 5th and 6th grades have 2 certified teachers, one who focuses on humanities (Social Studies and English) and one who focuses on Science and Math. Our 7th and 8th graders enjoy the identical set up. Our AmeriCorps teachers build out the team and bring their experience and passion to everything from the supervision of lunch and recess to instruction in the following areas: technology, health, service learning, world languages, Lit Club, advanced math instruction, facilitation of academic games and supervision of extra-curricular activities ranging from sailing to yoga, volleyball club and chess club.

We welcome you to visit us and understand our instructional model more closely. We are excited about it, and think you will be too!
New to the Crew

**Michelle Cupid** received a B.A. in psychology, with a minor in Visual Arts, from Bowdoin College in 2012. After graduating, she worked for Episcopal Social Services, teaching art and literacy at after school programs in The Bronx and in Harlem. She is ready to apply her psychology experiences and after school experiences to OSS! She enjoys playing the guitar, writing, painting, and learning — especially learning about psychology. She is enthused to join the AmeriCorps team and immerse herself in the OSS and New Bedford community.

**Kim Dickinson** is the Special Projects Coordinator at OSS. Kim has worked with children, adolescents and elders in a range of capacities for nearly 40 years. Kim’s motivation to serve people in a meaningful way and her background in art and literacy have found expression in a variety of settings: public and private schools, preschools, after school programs, summer camps, nursing homes and fellowship programs. With a B.S. in Psychology from St. Lawrence University, Kim began her career as a Social Worker in a nursing home and a residential home for adolescent girls. After earning a Master’s Degree in Art Education with a focus on clothing as an art form, Kim was unexpectedly offered a position in the professional costume shop at the Huntington Theater in Boston. Kim’s personal hobbies include gardening, all kinds of hands on projects and travelling with her husband and daughter. Kim is delighted to be part of the OSS community where she is as much a learner as a teacher.

**Betsy Lawrence** joins OSS as the Volunteer Coordinator. She recently moved to the area full-time after being a summer visitor for many years. She holds a B.A. from Colgate University. After a career as a college recruiter at The Federal Reserve Bank of New York, Microsoft and Egghead Discount Software, she made a foray into the independent school world as a development officer at Concord Academy. This was followed by a stint in the head search business, then another as an ex-pat in Singapore with her young family, and then 10 years as the proprietor of a stationery store! Most recently she served as an Admissions Assistant and Substitute teacher at Tower School in Marblehead, MA. Last year she volunteered at OSS as a tutor in the 5th grade. She serves on the Board of Visitors at Nashoba Brooks School in Concord, MA.

**Chris Magni** joins OSS this year as an AmeriCorps Teacher. He is a graduate of the University of New Hampshire, where he earned a B.S. in Business Administration with a concentration in Finance, International Business and Economics. While at UNH, he was a Resident Assistant, Teaching Assistant to the Italian Program and a member of the school’s Rugby Club. Chris is passionate about math education and world languages and culture. He has worked in international education as well as for the Boys and Girls Club of America and looks forward to being part of the New Bedford community.

**Katy Mastrocola** is a first-year AmeriCorps volunteer co-teacher at OSS. She is originally from North Andover, MA, and graduated from Hamilton College with a BA in English and Psychology in 2013. During high school and college, Katy enjoyed playing the clarinet in several ensembles and performing in plays and improv groups. She also enjoyed participating in Hamilton’s community service programs, where she served as an America Reads tutor and helped teach arts and crafts at a local youth center. In her free time, Katy also likes reading, writing, drawing, skiing, doing yoga, and cooking. Katy is looking forward to growing as a teacher and sharing her passions with the OSS community!

**Katelyn Rapoza** is a first year AmeriCorps teacher who lives in Westport, MA — and has for her entire life. She graduated from Bridgewater State University in January 2013 with a B.S. in Psychology and a Special Education Minor. During her time at Bridgewater Katelyn was actively involved with her sorority, Gamma Phi Beta, which teams up with Girls on the Run, CampfireUSA and Girl Guides of Canada to promote resiliency and confidence in young girls. She also volunteered her time during her senior year to help with a local Girl Scouts’ miniseries. Katelyn worked as an Orientation Leader at BSU welcoming new students into the school’s community through diversity training and teambuilding and is feeling extremely grateful and excited to have this experience at Our Sisters’ School!

In addition, we welcome Tom Short & Brent Tavares who recently came aboard as music and dance teachers at OSS. Welcome!
JOIN THE CREW -
Volunteer at Our Sisters’ School

Fall is here and we are in need of volunteers all over our school! We would love to have you join the crew of over 150 volunteers! If you are interested in volunteering, or know someone who might be interested, we have needs in the following areas:

Evening Study Tutors: (Monday-Thursday 5:00PM-6:15PM) Tutors help students with their homework, and organizational skills, and act as academic mentors. We ask that volunteers commit to once a week for 12 weeks (or more!).

Athletics Volunteers: (Monday, Tuesday and Thursday 4:00PM-5:00PM) Athletics volunteers instruct girls in a sport, exercise or dance activity. Past examples include but are not limited to yoga, African dance, volleyball, ballet, or hooping! We are open to all ideas that get the girls moving! Take an hour of your week to mentor girls and get a workout at the same time!

Club Volunteers: (Wednesdays 4:00PM-5:00PM) Have a hobby you would like to share with our girls? We are looking for volunteers to run a club for an hour every Wednesday; we have three sessions per year. Past clubs have included quilting, robotics, and arts & crafts. We are currently looking for someone to lead a sewing club, photography, cheerleading or choral club!

Office Support: We are always looking for professional and enthusiastic individuals to help us in the Front Office in 2-3 hour shifts with filing, shredding, photocopying, maintaining various logs, and answering phones. Experience with Excel and Microsoft Word is a plus.

World Language Mentors: (Mondays 1:45PM-2:30PM, Tuesday 3:00PM-3:45PM, and Thursday 10:00AM-10:45AM) We are currently looking for French, Portuguese and Spanish speakers to provide conversational assistance with our world language students.

Music Mentors: (Wednesday afternoons, timing is flexible) We are currently looking for volunteer musical instructors for piano, saxophone, clarinet and drums.

If you would like to come for a tour of our school and explore any or all of these opportunities, please call Betsy Lawrence, Volunteer Coordinator, at OSS at 508-994-1255, Ext 300, or email blawrence@oursistersschool.org.

ACADEMIC UPDATES -
NEW INITIATIVE AT OUR SISTERS’ SCHOOL

If you visit us at Our Sisters’ School between 1PM-1:30PM, the school will feel eerily quiet. We ARE in the building but halls and classrooms are silent because we are all reading! Silent Sustained Reading is the name of our initiative, and it means that we are practicing our reading stamina and indulging our reading interest every day that we are at school and it is FUN.

Speaking of FUN, this year is also exciting because each week, every OSS student has a chance to learn about science and math through instruction at the Community Boating Center. While at CBC students sail 23’ Sonars in Clark’s Cove with three certified sailing instructors while learning about tides, weather, and sailing lingo! Our students are tying knots, building character and learning how to using the ocean as a platform for learning.

We have our fingers crossed that when it gets too cold for sailing we’ll be able to head to the Ocean Explorium to learn more about the waters we’ve been sailing and the creatures that thrive in and depend on a healthy eco-system. A grant has been submitted, and if it is accepted, we’ll feel fabulously lucky!

The school year started for the staff and the 7th and 8th graders at Driftwood Ranch where, through a program called Community Core, we began thinking actively about the benefits of living in a proactive and vibrant community, and what work is required to maintain a community. Students are already using new vocabulary and making leadership oriented decisions as we set off on a path toward cultivating an intentional community.

If you want to be an active part of Our Sisters’ School community we welcome you to join us on Fridays between 3:45PM-4:45PM when we all come together to reflect on the week and to enjoy games: Scrabble, Boggle, Clue, Trivial Pursuit, Uno, Set, Chess...you name it, we want to play it! We want to learn to practice winning and losing graciously, reading and following directions, starting and finishing activities, and taking responsibility for our own fun. Please join us!

We could go on and on and on about all the wonderful things we are excited about, but for now we’ll leave it at this.
BOARD OF TRUSTEES

OFFICERS
Lisa Schmid Alvord
President
Gaelen Canning
Vice President
Gail Fortes
Vice President
Doreen Lopes
Vice President
Elizabeth Huidekoper
Treasurer
William Prescott
Clerk

TRUSTEES
Laurie Barrett
Christina Bascom
Alison Coolidge Boreiko
Kate Dabney
Alice Flint
Kim Francis
Helena DaSilva Hughes
Margaret McGetrick
Susan Perry
Bernadette Souza
John Vasconcellos
Russell Weigel

MARK YOUR CALENDARS
April 8th, 2014 - Volunteer Luncheon
May 30th, 2014 - OSS Visual Performing Arts Show

For more information please call the school at 508-994-1255.
Hope to see soon!