On May 25, Our Sisters’ School celebrated its 10th birthday. This brought long-time friends together—teachers and staff over the decade, supporters, volunteers, community partners and our girls—to the grand opening and vine-cutting of the beautiful new Outdoor Classroom. Birthday cakes, ukulele serenades, chorus songs, and step dancing collectively paid tribute to our Founding Trustees and marked 10 years of empowering middle school girls with a transformative education.

The afternoon continued with the annual Festival of Arts & Achievement where our students showcased their academic and artistic accomplishments from this school year. Our girls shared their work and skills, demonstrated scientific experiments, engaged visitors one-on-one with computers and tablets, proudly exhibited drawings, paintings and art projects while fielding questions from our guests about the process.

The evening was capped off with a school play inspired by Kobi Yamada’s book “What Do You Do With an Idea?” All students were performers, musicians and technicians, and the production highlighted the OSS impact on the community over the last 10 years.
Looking Forward  by Sarah Herman, Head of School

Springtime at Our Sisters’ School always bursts with growth, change, and celebration. Our eighth-graders make their decisions about secondary schools and their steps beyond OSS. Our seventh-graders anticipate the joys and responsibilities of being the oldest students in the building and role models for their younger peers. The sixth grade prepares for more challenging academic work and stepping into bigger leadership shoes. We are busy enrolling the fifth-graders who will join us this fall and become part of the OSS family. We also happily celebrated our 10th anniversary with a birthday bash in May.

The annual cycles of brave, creative, and tireless work that go into making OSS grow started more than 10 years ago, in the fall of 2008. The seeds planted in those early years have developed stable roots and are now blossoming into full flowers. As we celebrate our progress and this 10-year landmark, we deeply appreciate and are thankful for the efforts and generosity invested in building the strong foundation upon which we continue to grow.

While giving a tour of the School recently, I asked a teacher to help me convince a staff candidate to join our team. The teacher said, "OSS is strong and brave and doing great things, and we have so much momentum!" I was energized by the commitment and enthusiasm she expressed, and I feel grateful for the spirit that keeps us always striving to maintain a growth mindset. We are steadfastly committed to continue nurturing our garden, cultivating success, and planting seeds for further progress.

This edition of Voyages highlights many of our successes. When we speak of OSS to others, we struggle to narrow down our list of triumphs. Would we write about a truly phenomenal four-year college scholarship recently awarded to one of our graduates? Would we talk about our outrageously productive and celebrated Creative & Visual Arts and STEAM teacher who has led our Outdoor Classroom construction project while being celebrated as the Massachusetts Middle School Art Teacher of the Year and strategizing skills. The conference allowed students to confirm their own knowledge while showing off our wonderful school. The excitement and pride were palpable, and here are more examples of how we continue nurturing our garden, and doing great things, and we struggle to narrow down our list of triumphs.

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Community as Campus

The walls of our school building do not define our classroom learning spaces; instead, we see the whole community as our campus. Regular classes and clubs take students out of the building to learn to sail in the harbor, to row on the Westport River, and to local sites for internships and service work. In May, we joined the YWCA and the Women’s Fund traveling to Beacon Hill to speak with, and learn from, legislators so we could advocate for gun safety laws and equal pay for equal work—topics of local, national and international significance. In early April, 13 OSS students, four parents and three teachers attended the New England League of Middle Schools conference in Providence, RI, not as attendees, but as presenters. Students demonstrated how the OSS STEAM class helps them practice investigating, predicting, thinking and strategizing skills. The conference allowed students to confirm their own knowledge while showing off our wonderful school. The excitement and pride were palpable, and here are more examples of how authentic learning harnesses the power of our Community as Campus from four of our 8th-grade students:

Karla, presenter at the STEM4 Girls Conference at UMass Dartmouth:

It’s Saturday morning and young girls in bright yellow shirts sprint from station to station together. Volunteer presenters, like myself, stand prepared in long-sleeve blue shirts. Loud screams of excitement and group leaders call out to find their students. A robotics team and a keynote speaker from NASA stand tall, proud and official. Little girls get excited about exploring different STEAM fields and struggle to complete five-minute challenges. “Makey Makeys” are plugged into computers; digital bling is spread over tables; ozobots buzz back and forth; and the smell of the fresh pizza lunch taunts all of us.

Out of everyone there, my job at the conference, along with one of my peers, is to teach about Makey Makeys: a tool that allows you to connect everyday objects like an apple, or banana, to computer programs. I show conference guests how my Makey Makey works, and allow them to explore and play. I know that by being there I am doing my part to help influence the women of the future to enter STEAM-related fields.

Judging by the looks on their faces, I believe that I am successful.

Keeilah at Community Boating Center:

When exiting the bus at CBC, one is instantly greeted by the sharp, salty smell of the ocean. Instructors stand on the staircase of the building; the grass on the lawn has been trampled by the feet of eager young sailors. The life jackets housed in the basement smell like seawater: fish, seaweed, and salt. They are damp and cold against the skin. Instructors wrangle us together, announcing which team is in which boat. Students board the motorboat and sprawl across the bottom, urging the instructor to go faster, shrieking when assaulted by the cold spray. The short trip from motorboat to sailboat seems treacherous, but a leg-up and a supportive hand are all that are needed. Once on the sailboat, students spring into action; remove the sail cover, unfurl the mainsail...continued on page 4
and rig the jib. Wind fills the sails and a snapping sound fills the air. Team members settle.

Before starting at CBC, I believed that I was not good at any sport, unlike my very athletic mom. Because of my height, she pushed me to try basketball or volleyball, but I refused. My first time on a sailboat, I cried the entire time; the second time, I rode on the front of the boat, exhilarated. I wanted to learn everything about sailing, and I learned quickly. Finally, a sport I was good at!

Through sailing, I learned about the importance of clear communication and establishing roles in a team. On my fall sailing team, we determined what each member had aptitude for, and wanted to do, so we moved as a well-oiled machine as soon as we stepped onto the boat. I love to skipper, or steer the boat, and it is the job of the skipper to communicate whatever maneuver is happening to the rest of the team. I needed to learn how to do this in a fast, clear, and respectful way; the words themselves were already set, so I just adjusted my tone. Probably the most important thing that I have learned through sailing is that it is important to find an activity you love, and then work to become really good at it.

Amelia at Youth Opportunities Unlimited:

It was a freezing cold Friday in November. There was no school, but the OSS community was together anyway, all bundled up by the Warming House.

Generous community members were dropping off bags of food which we eagerly grabbed and began sorting. We were volunteering, collecting Thanksgiving meals to give to people who needed them for the upcoming holiday. Jumping up and down and sharing hats to keep warm, everyone was as helpful and positive as we are in the OSS hallways, despite the change in weather and location. Participating in this event showed me what’s most important to our community. A lot of people could have stayed home, relaxing in their warm beds—but they didn’t. We all worked hard to do as much as possible for people who were in need and we made the most of the experience.

“Through sailing, I learned about the importance of clear communication and establishing roles in a team.”

Keelah ’18, Hotchkiss ’22

This volunteer service event reinforced for me how much everyone at Our Sisters’ School truly does care about the community around us. We frequently come together to just give back, and this was a perfect example.
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Isadora at the New Bedford Whaling Museum:

Every Friday, when I walk into the Whaling Museum, I’m greeted by Chelsea’s smiling face. I smell whale oil coming from the skeletons hanging in the atrium as soon as I’m exposed to the inside air. We wait for whomever we will be working with: Sarah, Christina, Bob, or Brittany. Sometimes we enjoy snacks in the apprentice lab. Most of the time, I hold a piece of paper and a pair of scissors, creating a whale hat, a whale puppet, a whale camera, a whale—whatever you can think of—for the museum’s next event. Over two years as an intern here, I have learned many things about being an OSS student in the community. We are always doing something to help the Greater New Bedford area, whether it is to help prepare for an event at the Whaling Museum for all ages, or to prepare for a program that helps provide apprentice alumni to receive college scholarships. I have learned what real world work in an office is (sometimes fun, sometimes not). But the beauty of it is working hard for a positive outcome. When I graduate from OSS and move on to becoming a high school student, I hope to continue my work at the Whaling Museum as part of the apprentice program.
Jordan Lopes ’15 was awarded a Herter Memorial Scholarship for up to 50% of her financial needs for four years of college. We are over-the-moon pleased for her as this truly opens up a world of possibilities as she plans her next steps. Jordan said, “I’ve had so many obstacles to overcome, but it finally feels like the hard work is paying off!” Jordan will be a senior at Bishop Stang this fall.

Tobey Eugenio, Creative & Visual Arts and STEAM teacher, received the 2018 Middle Level Art Educator of the Year award from the Massachusetts Art Education Association. Her capacities as a teacher are magnificent, and if you meet her, you’ll quickly see why she was selected for this exceptional honor. As Emma Cranford ’18 said in her graduation speech, “Ms. Eugenio brings life to our school!”

Karla ’18, through her work with the Student Council, led the charge on a student-written grant and procured 10 new Chromebooks from TinkerCad for OSS students.

Keeilah ’18 captivated her audiences at the MaBaCh (math, basketball, chess) tournament in March, and on Beacon Hill in May during Women’s Advocacy Day. She spoke convincingly on behalf of gun control, leaving government aides thinking she must already be a successful college student!

Alejandra ’18 and her team raised over $11,000 worth of goods to support the underserved and needy immigrant population of New Bedford with an initiative titled “From Our Hands to Yours.”

The Class of 2018 wrote a play commemorating the women’s suffrage movement. It was so powerful that they were invited to perform at the YWCA’s MLK50 celebration at Bristol Community College. The audience was stirred by their show, Feminist Grandmas, as well as by the depth of knowledge and conviction displayed during a Q & A following their performance.

Students In Action Team, through participation in the Jefferson Awards Foundation, finished first in the Eastern MA division against all high school teams. Three eighth-graders and two teachers were honored with a trip to Washington DC this summer to join the national competition where OSS will be celebrated for its commitment to excellence in service.

These Shoutouts demonstrate our commitment to the OSS Core Values of Excellence, Community, Citizenship and Leadership. We are so proud!

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The Next Voyage

Secondary School Update

The tradition of excellence continues at OSS. The Class of 2018 graduated on June 13 and will be moving onto their next journey this fall. The 15 eighth-grade students applied to 21 schools, completing 62 applications and garnered a total of $251,946 in six scholarship awards to four independent schools and a local parochial school. Students were also accepted to Westport High School, the Honors Program at the New Bedford High School, Bristol County Agricultural High School and the Greater New Bedford Regional Vocational-Technical High School.

The Class of 2018 will attend:

- Bishop Stang High School (2)
- Bristol County Agricultural High School (1)
- Dana Hall School (1)
- Westport High School (1)
- Greater New Bedford Regional Vocational-Technical High School (5)
- The Hotchkiss School (1)
- New Bedford High School Honors Program (2)
- Noble and Greenough School (1)
- St. George’s School (1)

Left to right: Keeliah ’18, Alejandra ’18 and Taileigh ’18. They will be attending Hotchkiss, Nobles, and Voc-Tech, respectively.
Every member of the OSS Class of 2014 has graduated high school this spring. Many of them returned to the School in early May for the annual Senior Honor Dinner to share their exciting plans. Their eighth-grade “sister sailors” interviewed them and shared highlights of their time in high schools, as well as their aspirations. Of those alumnae who have already made their decisions, they will be attending:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Bristol Community College</th>
<th>UMass Amherst</th>
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<tr>
<td>Fashion Institute of Technology</td>
<td>UMass Dartmouth</td>
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<tr>
<td>Simmons College</td>
<td>UMass Dartmouth School of Nursing</td>
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<tr>
<td>Suffolk University</td>
<td>University of Tampa</td>
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Left to right: Jael ’14 will be attending the UMass Dartmouth School of Nursing; Breann ’14 and Mia ’14 will be attending BCC.

Left to right: Secondary School and Alumnae Director Laurie Knight with Amaya ’14 who will be attending University of Tampa.

Left to right: Amelia ’18 will be attending Westport High School; Head of School Sarah Herman; Isadora ’18 will be attending the New Bedford High School Honors Program.

“With classes like dendrites that teach us how to study and grow our brains, I have learned how to effectively learn and remember.”

Rhyannon ’17, St. George’s School ’21

Left to right: Humanities Dept. Head Ariana Wohl; Lainie ’18 will be attending Bishop Stang.

Left to right: Jordan will I’ve had so many obstacles to overcome, but it finally feels like the hard work is paying off!”

I have learned how to dentrites that teach and grow our brains, remember.”

Rhyannon ’17, St. George’s School ’21
Why “Our Sisters”?
Our school’s name honors the bravery of the women known as “sister sailors” who boldly headed out to sea from New Bedford’s harbor during the city’s whaling days. Like these women, OSS students courageously embark on a voyage in a challenging academic environment carefully crafted to support them as they discover and achieve their greatest potential, while finding true north on their moral compass.

MARK YOUR CALENDARS

* 10th Anniversary Celebration Fundraiser:
  Sunday, July 29, with Margery Eagan as speaker
* Car Wash: Sunday, August 12, 10:30 am-2 pm, at OSS
  Rain date: Sunday, August 19

Above right photo:
Left to right: Julianna ’20 learns from alumna Carlyn ’17 in CBC class.

SUPPORT THE OSS ANNUAL FUND
Unlike charter schools, OSS is not eligible for state funding as a single-sex school and relies solely on our friends and foundations. Your generosity makes it possible for OSS to provide a transformative education to our girls. Make a gift today at www.oursistersschool.org or contact Georgie Goulding, Director of Advancement, at ggoulding@oursistersschool.org or 508.994.1255 to discuss the different ways you can help OSS.

Non-discrimination Statement
Our Sisters’ School, Inc. admits girls as students to the School regardless of their race, color, national or ethnic origin, religion, creed, or sexual orientation. The School does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national or ethnic origin, religion, creed, or sexual orientation in administration of its educational policies, admissions policies, scholarship programs, athletic and other school administered programs.

Our Sisters’ School, Inc. employs personnel of any race, color, national or ethnic origin, gender, gender identity, religion, creed, and sexual orientation to all the rights, privileges and activities generally accorded or made available to personnel at the School.