

Ohio State School for the Blind



Cynthia Johnson, Interim Superintendent

April 2008

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Good Luck Dr. Mazzoli!

On January 31, 2008, OSSB said “arrivederci” (farewell) to Dr. Louis A. Mazzoli, Ed.D. After 45 years in public service including 40 in education, Dr. Mazzoli has retired from OSSB where he has been superintendent for the past 10 ½ years.



Mazzoli with a 2007 graduate

Dr. Lou’s future plans include spending time with his wife Joan, their three children, and four grandchildren. He is also looking forward to traveling and visiting relatives in Georgia, Pennsylvania, and Florida. Eventually, he would like to teach college courses if the opportunity arises. According to Dr. Mazzoli, one of the main highlights of his career has been working with students and staff at OSSB. He assisted the evolution of OSSB through his openness and love for kids, and by ensuring that students come first. He was willing to go the extra mile to ensure that everything possible was done to give students the opportunity to succeed, no matter what the circumstances.

Though Dr. Mazzoli will be missed, the staff and students at OSSB wish him well and ask that he not be a stranger! Good luck Dr. Lou.

OSSB welcomes Cynthia M. Johnson, Interim Superintendent

OSSB is excited to announce that effective February 1, 2008 Mrs. Cynthia McQueen Johnson became the Interim Superintendent of the Ohio State School for the Blind. Mrs. Johnson has been with OSSB for approximately 24 years as the School Psychologist and most recently as Intake/Outreach Clinic Administrator during the past three years. Mrs. Johnson also has 30 years total experience in public education with school districts including Columbus City.

Mrs. Johnson has two adult children—Brittany and William Jr., and one grandchild. She enjoys power walking and city gardening when Ohio weather permits. She is one of the founders of the Ebony Ya Ya Book Club and is a board member at her church.

Mrs. Johnson looks forward to working with the Ohio Department of Education to provide the continuity in leadership necessary during this transitional period at the Ohio State School for the Blind.

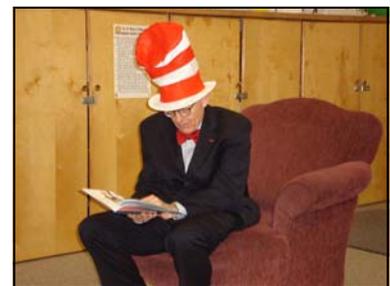
Transition Coordinator on board at OSSB

In November 2007, we welcomed Ann Pilewskie to OSSB as our Transition Coordinator. Ms. Pilewskie has 28 years of previous experience in special education. Much of that time was spent as a classroom teacher, and as a consultant for students with multiple disabilities, including visual impairments. As Transition Coordinator, she will work with students, staff and support agencies, to develop specific plans that support the long term, post-graduation goals of students and their families. These goals include planning for post-secondary education, work, independent or supported living, and community participation. Ms. Pilewskie will help coordinate services and make sure that the transition plan proceeds as determined through the IEP process. Some of the activities Pilewskie has been involved with thus far are: working with seniors on resumes and college essays; supporting the high school EnVisionIT program by talking with the junior and senior English classes; visiting a sheltered workshop to help determine supports for a graduating senior; collaborating with the Bureau of Services for Visually Impaired (BSVI) on special programs; working closely with our Vocational Education staff on career and vocational curriculum; working with individual students on social skills and problem solving; and developing a summer transition workshop week for 11th and 12th graders. Look for a Transition Link on our website (www.ossb.oh.gov) this summer with information on activities, programs, resources, etc. **Parents**, if you have questions regarding transition, feel free to contact Ann directly at 614-728-1961 or e-mail her at apilewskie@ossb.oh.gov.

OSSB celebrates Dr. Seuss' Birthday



On March 3rd, elementary students and teachers from OSSB traveled to the library at the Ohio School for the Deaf to hear a story read by Dr. Gordon Gee. Dr. Gee (President of The Ohio State University) read The Cat in the Hat Comes Back, to help celebrate the birthday of Dr. Seuss. He wore a red and white hat similar to the character in the story. To honor Dr. Gee, OSSB students wore bow ties they made with art teacher Ms. Nona Pierce. Bow ties are synonymous with Dr. Gee, and our very own Mr. Marcom! We appreciated Dr. Gee taking time from his busy schedule to help us celebrate Dr. Seuss' birthday.



Mrs. Agler, CSO Music Educator of the Year!



OSSB's own music teacher, Carol Agler, has won the 2008 Columbus Symphony Orchestra Music Educator of the Year Award. Each year, the CSO chooses three winners (elementary, secondary, and community divisions) from music educators who are nominated for Music Educator of the Year. Mrs. Agler received the 2008 Columbus Symphony Orchestra Music Educator of the Year Award, secondary division on April 6 at an awards brunch. The event was followed by a CSO concert at the beautiful Ohio Theater. This award comes with a \$5000 grant which will be used to purchase band instruments. We are so proud of Mrs. Agler and the great things she is teaching all of our music students at OSSB! When you see Mrs. Agler at the Spring recital and concert, be sure to congratulate her in person!!

Pee Wee Swimmers and Wrestlers and Cheerleaders! Oh My!



OSSB hosted the 2008 Pee Wee meet with Indiana School for the Blind, and Kentucky School for the Blind on Wednesday, March 5th. The following students participated in this year's wrestling meet: Billy Brandon, Kellon Duncan, Jonathon Emmons, Donald Stewart, Cameron Conant and Davon Bumper. Donald and Jonathon each won one match and lost one match, and Kellon won both of his matches by pinning his opponents. Billy and Cameron lost both of their matches but gave their best effort. Congratulations to all the Pee Wee wrestlers for a great season! - Jeff Shaw, Coach

This year was a great year for the OSSB Pee Wee Cheerleaders. They performed three different routines. Their first cheer was called Step In, Step Out. Students also learned a dance that talked about opposites, and their final cheer involved audience participation—"When you say Red, we say Blue!" There were 12-13 students involved this year, and all the kids had a great experience. Big thanks go out to the Varsity cheerleaders and teachers who so graciously donated their time to help our students learn how to cheer on the Panthers! - Melissa Tate, Coach



Seedlings offers free Braille books to children in Ohio

Seedlings Braille Books for Children Announces "Keep Kids in Touch" 2008. The "Keep Kids in Touch" Program was designed by Seedlings to help keep kids "in touch" with books and reading during the summer. Thanks to some very generous donations, they are able to offer two free Braille books to every blind child in Ohio (and 6 other states). Pre-readers are also eligible to receive two Print-and-Braille books to enjoy during the summer with their families. These books are free for families to keep.

You can register your child online right now! Just go to: www.seedlings.org and click on "Special Projects" and then on "Keep Kids in Touch". Check out the other Special Projects while you are there! Since the books will be mailed sometime between May and July, Seedlings will need to use home addresses for the children. Please be assured that all information is kept strictly confidential. Seedlings does not sell, rent, or give its mailing lists to anyone.

The registration deadline is May 1, 2008 but avoid the rush ... **register now!** If you have any questions, please contact Seedlings at 800-777-8552.

Residential Living at OSSB



Evenings in the Residential program have been busy this winter with many exciting activities! In January, there was a 70's dance party where everyone danced to some disco. Students from B-2 made pet rocks, C-3 sang their own version of The Brady Bunch Show theme and D-1 acted out their own movie trailer for JAWS. The Village People, also known as C-2, showed up for the event to lead everyone in the YMCA dance.

In February, 30 of the students went ice skating. Some of the students had never tried it, and everyone had a good time mastering the skill of ice skating. In March, we had an "Around the World Dinner." Each Cottage cooked a dish from a different country to share with everyone. In other news, students have been holding monthly recreation committee meetings to plan events, and they have some great ideas for the rest of the school year!



Book Club at OSSB RULES!

The OSSB Book Club finished reading RULES and on February 29th. We had a wonderful time chatting with Mrs. Cynthia Lord, the author of RULES, Dr. Katherine Schneider (the founder and namesake of the Schneider Family Book Award which RULES won!), The Mississippi School for the Blind, Mississippi State Library for the Blind and of course, our fantastic librarians up at the Cleveland Library for the Blind. Our students asked thoughtful, probing questions of both Mrs. Lord and Dr. Schneider, made great observations, and in general conducted an outstanding internet chat!

April finds the OSSB book club reading RUBY HOLLER by Sharon Creech. We are just getting into this story and discovering the quirky characters. Do join us at home and read along! We hope to have finished with this title by the end of April or the beginning of May.

OSSB Girl Scout Troop 267 News



The 2007-2008 Girl Scout year has been a busy one. OSSB's Mrs. Peitras stepped down after leading the troop for seven years! She remains very much a part of the troop and attends every meeting. New leaders are Marla Bump (Olivia, 3rd grade) and Beth Riley (Kelsey, 6th grade). The troop meets twice a month on the first and third Tuesdays from 4-5 pm. Troop 267 is a very busy and active group with over 20 members.

Highlights: Our initial meeting the girls shared a special memento or memory from their summer vacation. In October the troop learned about the history of scouting, and celebrated the birthday of Girl Scout founder, Juliette Gordon Low. Troop 267 also had the opportunity to show their pumpkin decorating talents as they decorated small pumpkins that were distributed later to area nursing homes.

Candy cane ornaments and greeting cards were made by the troop in December and donated to OSSB for the Winter Concert Silent Auction. Celebrating the season and one another was the theme of our early December party which featured pizza, presents and Christmas caroling to the cottages. January kicked-off the annual Girl Scout Cookie sale - yum! The girls helped our feathered friends when they made bird feeders using stale bagels, pine cones, peanut butter and bird seed. In February the girls discussed World Thinking Day, commemorated every February 22nd. The theme this year for WTD was water, and the troop discussed ways to conserve water.

Though only a handful of meetings remain for the year, the troop is looking forward to more learning experiences, and the opportunity to be with friends. Registration materials for the 2008-2009 year will be sent home this spring.

Summer Camp 2008 options at OSSB for Ohio students

The Ohio State School for the Blind will be hosting a series of **summer programs**. Through a collaboration with several organization, we will be offering educational experiences to school age students who are blind or visually impaired. The following six summer programs will be offered between June 16 and August 8, 2008: Math Through Movement, Braille Immersion, Math, Science & Technology, Specialized Track Camp, Lifetime Leisure and Recreation, and Preparing for Transition.

There is no cost to parents or school districts for students who are selected to participate in the enrichment programs. Information about each camp (age and grade levels) as well as registration forms may be found on our website at www.ossb.oh.gov. Forms must be returned to the Ohio State School for the Blind by May 1, 2008. If you have any questions or would like a registration form or packet of materials, please contact Ann Pilewskie, OSSB Transition Coordinator at 614-728-1961.

For information about other camps around Ohio for blind or visually impaired students, contact OSSB Parent Mentor, Lauri Kaplan at 614-728-1567.

Students enjoy Japanese Taiko Drumming Residency

The Ohio Arts Council provided a grant for OSSB to enjoy a two-week residency with Capital University "World Music" professor Eric Paton. This residency stretched over 5 weeks during November and December. Due to the unique schedule, the junior high music class AND the Varsity choir were chosen to be "core groups" meeting with Paton Sensei (Sensei is "teacher" in Japanese). These groups presented their Taiko pieces at the December Holiday Concert. The junior high class learned a piece titled "One-thousand Reverberations of the Sea" which honored the humanitarian spirit and courage to rebuild after an earthquake hit Kobe, Japan. The Varsity choir created their own piece called "I Like." They each made up a rhythm, and then composed words to go with that rhythm. Rhythms and words were chained together, an intro and ending composed, and the form was established. The final result was most impressive, as was the junior high's performance.



Eric Paton teaching students in Mrs. Young-Dove's class

All of the elementary classes learned many Japanese games and songs and played the large taiko drums. We were fortunate to have the Japanese American Society of Central Ohio (JASCO) present two hands-on programs. Koto players (the koto is a 7-foot hollow "log" with strings stretched across it) in kimonos played for us and invited each of our students to play their kotos. They shared the Wild Bird game "Kagome" which has become our favorite. The JASCO presenters gave each student an origami kimono. The four koto players joined us during the Holiday Concert as the whole school sang "Sakura."

Ohio State School for the Blind Important Dates to Remember:

April

- 11-12 Swim/Forensics Meet @ Home
- 17 Elementary Zoo Trip
- 18-19 Swim/Forensics Meet @ Wisconsin
- 21 No School
- April 22- May 9 OAT Testing

May

- 1 Senior Dinner
- 8 Athletic Awards Night
- 12 Band Awards Night
- 15 Elementary Arts Festival
- 15 Junior/Senior Prom
- 16 Love Your School Day
- 21 Elementary Track & Field Day
- 22 Spring Concert & Recital
- 26 Memorial Day/No School

June

- 2-4 Senior Trip, Whitewater Rafting in West Virginia
- 6 Last Day of School/Graduation



OSSB New Campus Information

The Ohio State School for the Blind is looking toward the future, and planning is under way for new facilities! Current plans have us spending two more years in our existing buildings before moving into brand new core buildings and campus housing. For more information, check the New Campus website at <http://newcampus.ossb.oh.gov/>

*Please join us for:
The OSSB Spring Music Concert
and Recital
Thursday, May 22, 2008
Recital – 1:00pm
Spring Concert – 7:00*

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