

Ohio State School for the Blind



PANTHER COUNTRY

Cynthia Johnson, Interim Superintendent

June 2008

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OSSB bids farewell to Mrs. Tolle

Lauri Kaplan, Parent Mentor

At OSSB's recent graduation ceremony, Phys. Ed. teacher, Jim Peterfish took time to remember the many accomplishments of retiring teacher, Annie Tolle. Mrs. Tolle has been our Physical Education and Health Teacher, as well as Athletic Director during the past 33 years. Mr. Peterfish, who has worked alongside Annie for 26 years, playfully mentioned that Mrs. Tolle has been teaching longer than *some* OSSB teachers have "been alive!" He spoke about her constant dedication to the students during her tenure at the School for the Blind, and of her energy, integrity and professionalism.

Mrs. Tolle motivated her students while teaching at OSSB, and has plans to continue conveying the same message after she retires. According to Peterfish, Annie has commissioned a giant mural to be painted along the south wall of the Gym. The mural is not in her honor, but rather to make sure Mrs. Tolle's inspiring message is heard long after she has retired. A larger than life painting, painted by a former student, will display a beautiful mountain landscape and the inscription, "Believe You Can!"

Graduating Class of 2008



OSSB graduates practice smiling for all those graduation photos!

On June 6th, 2008, the Senior Class and their families were honored at a special luncheon. Afterward, commencement exercises began with the traditional "march of the teachers" after which students were escorted by a special OSSB staff member. Graduates and guests were welcomed by Cynthia Johnson, Interim Superintendent. Guest speaker, retired OSSB Superintendent, Dr. Louis Mazzoli urged students to "follow your dreams," and presented them with authentic Native American dreamcatchers.

Students from the class of 2008 have post-secondary plans to attend 2 or 4 year colleges, business enterprise training and career centers, or to pursue employment in their local community. Best wishes graduates!

Students Tackle Sweet Subject

Robin Finley, Reading Specialist



Mrs. Finley's 8th grade reading class had a sweet surprise at the end of April when their study of the Ben & Jerry's Ice cream company ended in an ice cream tasting. Students sampled flavors such as Chunky Monkey, Cinnamon Bun, Chocolate Fudge Brownie and Cherry Garcia. Everyone had a wonderful time. Can you guess the overall favorite? It was Cinnamon Bun! You've got to try it!

One last ride for Class of 2008

Jake Kaplan, OSSB Senior

Anxious! Apprehensive! Are those words that describe a senior trip? They are if you are the OSSB Class of 2008. That's how we felt before our recent whitewater rafting on the New River in West Virginia. Our senior trip was a thriller! We departed with excitement and nervousness for our amazing adventure early on the morning of June 2nd, and ended the day in Beckley, WV. The next morning we made the short trip to the New River.

Being on the rapids was like riding a rollercoaster with water; it was a soaker! The brave ones (including teachers Pat Wilson and Karen Koehler) took on the Lower New River, and the rest rode the more calm Upper New River. We returned to our hotel in Beckley that night, and collapsed from a day of thrills. No one went hungry in West Virginia as our journey took us to Ruby Tuesday, the Omelet Shoppe and Dirty Ernie's Rib Pit!

Our breathtaking trip concluded on June 4th with a stop at Magic Mountain for 3 hours of Adventure Golf, Laser Tag and plenty of arcade games followed by a spectacular dinner at Genji Japanese Steak House. This memorable trip was our final adventure together as the Class of 2008. As a class, we have had wild and nutty times; and this wacky ride has taught us about life, ourselves, and each other. As our ride slows and comes to an end, we will never forget our incredible journey together.



Wacky Seniors AND advisors at Genji

(Our story appeared in the Columbus Dispatch on the day we graduated, June 6th. For more information, go to www.columbusdispatch.com, and type in "senior rafting trip" under KEYWORD. Special thanks to Joe Blundo and Chris Russell from the Columbus Dispatch)

Inaugural O&M Taxi Trip

Aaron Wetli, O&M Instructor

On Thursday May 29th, 2008 OSSB's Orientation & Mobility staff collaborated with graduating seniors on the 'Inaugural O&M Senior Taxi Trip'. Five seniors independently made arrangements and boarded taxis traveling to The North Market, located in the Short North District of Columbus. Once there, the seniors had a delicious lunch choosing from among the many restaurants serving Italian, Greek, Vietnamese, and Brazilian food. The students also enjoyed listening to free live music while viewing the many vendors selling local products and hand-crafted items.



As the lesson ended, the students boarded a COTA bus (Central Ohio Transit Authority) and traveled independently back to OSSB. The mobility instructors were impressed with the skills displayed by this group, and know that they will all be successful travelers in the future. This was a unique and enjoyable lesson, and due to the senior's success, the lesson will be repeated in the future! Congratulations Class of 2008!

OSSB Key Club helps those in need

Rachel Smith, Key Club Advisor



With the 2007-2008 school year coming to a close, we would like to express our deepest thanks for everyone's support of the OSSB Key Club. Throughout the school year, we have sponsored many fund raisers. Who can forget the yummy Butter Braids and pumpkin rolls? Or the fabulous Thanksgiving baskets and the February Flower gram sale that absolutely rocked the house? Key Club members and staff even got a little wet as they washed cars, vans and trucks during the 2nd annual car wash on Tuesday, May 27th.

With the support of our fundraisers, the OSSB Key Club managed to raise nearly \$2000 this school year! WAY TO GO! That money in turn was spent to have a blanket drive for St. Lawrence Haven homeless shelter in the winter, and a clothing and goods shopping trip for the shelter this spring. In addition, we had the opportunity to help others in need closer to the OSSB family. Our parent organization, the Kiwanis Club, gave a scholarship to graduating senior, Michael Newell. Key Club is now working to set up an annual scholarship to honor a Senior Key Club member in the near future.

So thanks again for all of your support. It meant a lot to us and even more to those charities that reaped the benefits. It is good to give back to the community and help those in need while teaching students this important lesson. When you see a Key Club member, give them a pat on the back and thank them for all of their hard work!

Parents "Connect" on new web site

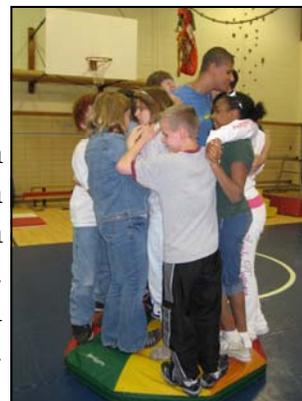
Lauri Kaplan, Parent Mentor

OSSB parents and friends, do you ever find yourself wishing you had a way to connect with other families of children with visual impairments? The National Association for Parents of Children with Visual Impairments (NAPVI) and the American Foundation for the Blind (AFB) recently launched a web site just for families, www.FamilyConnect.org. Family Connect gives parents a "place to support each other, share stories and concerns, and find resources on raising their children from birth to adulthood." The web site lets you create a personal profile so you may receive e-mail about events and news based on your child's age, eye condition, and geographic location. They also have a "search" feature if you are looking for specific information. Feel free to give it a try!

Jr. High Students work together

Annie Tolle, Phy. Ed Teacher

Throughout the year, our Junior High students have been working with Mr. Page and Ms. Buchanan on being respectful and cooperative with each other. Recently one of their activities was to see if all 11 of them could stand on a small mound about 50 inches wide and 16 inches tall. After much discussion and several tries the students' problem solved how to get all of them onto the mound without touching the floor. Great job and great team work by the 7th and 8th graders.



3rd Annual “Love Your School” Day

Pat Wilson, Student Council Advisor

The Student Council’s 3rd annual “Love Your School” Day dawned rainy and cool, but by the time students dismissed for an early lunch, the skies were clearing. More than a hundred students in all grades trooped out to the Natatorium, to the Sensory Garden, to the bus garage, or to the trophy case in the lobby to do something nice for OSSB.

Mr. Carl Brown, Building Maintenance Supervisor, and Ms. Jeanene Creiglow, provided rakes, hoes, spades, and trash bags, which students used to plant, mulch, and de-litter the campus. Pledge, Windex, and rags helped to spruce up desks, trophies, and the pool.

Even the littlest students found a way to help. Mrs. Butler’s students loved their school by filling a huge pot with an assortment of flowers. Mrs. Conrad’s first graders scrubbed desk tops and chairs in their classroom. Cleaning the vans and buses, always a popular project, was quickly snapped up by the 8th and 10th grades. As always, of course, the sprays of water hit more than vehicles.

There were two new and inventive projects this year. The 7th graders spent the afternoon cleaning the natatorium inside and out (Love Your POOL), to the delight of all the coaches!



Mrs. Butler and crew get ready to plant flowers!

Mrs. Frankenfield’s students designed and made “Love Your School” Day buttons for the participants.

At the end of the day, there were flowers everywhere—in big and little pots or in gardens behind cottages and near the school entrance. Vehicles dripped and gleamed, trophies shone, and classrooms smelled of Windex. And in the middle of the afternoon, the sun even came out! OSSB truly looked loved.

Review of VictorReader Stream

Macy McClain, Junior

Just a couple of weeks ago, I got a new piece of technology called the VictorReader Stream, which is made by HumanWare. The VictorReader Stream is a digital talking book player that weighs just 6 ounces, and can literally fit into the palm of your hand! It also can record voice notes and play music files (MP3’s), which I think is really cool.



When you are listening to a digital talking book, you can navigate by chapter, heading, page number, etc. You can also create bookmarks (marking the place you stopped reading) so that you can return to it easily. Among the many other features is a GOTO function that will allow you to jump to a particular file, page, bookmark, etc. The Victor comes with a USB port so users can download books and music from their personal computer.

After using it for just a short time, I would give the VictorReader Stream a “5 out of 5” (5 being the highest)! If you would like to learn more, or to purchase a VictorReader Stream (approximately \$329), you can go to www.humanware.com.

Student Council has active year

Pat Wilson, English Teacher

Three large project community service and student activities made up an active year for the 2007-2008 Student Council.

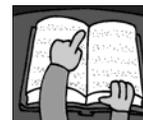
Their first project was a winter clothing drive to benefit needy families. The winning classes would be able to duct tape 4 staff members to the gymnasium wall. The victims selected were Ralph Maravola, Tech supervisor; Dan Kelley, Tech instructor; Kerry Nixon, Social Studies instructor, and Dr. Lou Mazzoli. The result was over 800 lb of new and gently used winter clothing, and Mrs. Peirano's 5-6th grade class took first prize. In the end, all students got to help them "Tape 'em All to the Wall."

In mid-May the Council sponsored a Fabulous Fifties Final Fling to honor the seniors and bid them farewell. Students danced to doo-wop and 50's rock, deftly spliced together by DJ Mike Memory. Students had their pictures taken with life-size cutouts of Marilyn Monroe and Elvis Presley. Prizes were given for the best 50's look and a hula hoop marathon. Highlighting the evening were the drag races down the dining hall, using oversized tricycles from the PE Department.

Two weeks later OSSB students were dismissed early for the third annual Love Your School Day. Classes were encouraged to devise a project that would benefit the school in some way. Check out the full story on page 4 of this newsletter!

This year's Student Council members included Michael Newell, President (first semester) and Leslie Adams, President, (second semester); Nathan Johnson, Secretary; Ben Horton, Sergeant at Arms; Marie Johnson, 12th grade representative; Cassidy Patton, 11th grade; Brendan Cifone, 10th grade; Tamara Batchelder, 9th grade; Herbie Agueda and Whitney Hammond, 8th grade co-representatives; Sarah Hawke and Hannah Siemer, 7th grade co-representatives.

OSSB Library salutes Class of 2008



Students, staff, and visitors to OSSB who walked past the library this spring made sure to stop and admire the "Senior Photo Collage". Each year, our school librarian orchestrates the collection to salute the graduating class. It is especially poignant, as there are always a few students who have spent their entire academic careers here at OSSB!

"I often enjoy listening to people sigh and reminisce about how a student has grown, and hearing students and staff remark as photos from long ago surface from someone's collection" remarked Mrs. Brown, OSSB's school librarian.

The photos are put up for everyone to enjoy, and for the graduates and their families to take home after the graduation ceremony. We enjoyed the trip down memory lane, and send best wishes to the Class of 2008!

Health Class studies Alternative Medicine

Annie Tolle, Health Teacher

This spring, the high school Health class did a unit on Alternative Medicine. Several guests were invited to tell about various modalities used in gaining and maintaining a healthy body. MaryAnne Linder, certified acupuncturist, spoke with the students regarding the benefits of acupuncture. Mr. Dan Kelley served as the patient with an ailing foot, as Ms. Linder inserted needles into his head as well as his leg and feet.



MaryAnne Linder demonstrates acupuncture to students in Tolle's class.

Other guest speakers demonstrated and spoke about Yoga, Qigong, Reiki, and Naturopathy. Students were required to do a research paper on alternative medicines, and later gave reports on Hypnosis, Massage, Detoxification, Shiatsu, Aromatherapy, Meditation, and Bach Flower Remedies. Students were encouraged to ask questions and look for ways to stay healthy without using invasive procedures such as surgery or drugs. Remember to eat well, exercise and sleep adequately and you will have a great, healthy summer!

Opening Doors Through Mentoring

Evette Simmons-Reed, MS

The OSSB Mentoring Club's third year has been filled with many exciting activities. Approximately 25 high school students participated in this innovative mentoring program supported by an integrated classroom career and transition curriculum. The Mentoring Club met once a month with volunteer mentors from the Ohio State University Buckeye Mentoring Hub and the Young Adult Transition Corps (YATC). The group kicked off the year with a "Beat Michigan" party in November. Juniors and seniors were able to reconnect with their mentors. Other face-to-face activities this year included a goalball challenge, a beep baseball game, online conferencing workshops, job shadowing experiences, and a panel discussion featuring OSSB graduates.

Sophomores were invited to take advantage of group mentoring via an email listserv. These students benefited from advice from upper classmen as well as the mentors. Both mentors and mentees were encouraged to e-mail each other or post messages to the listserv weekly throughout the year for advice, feedback on career matters, and current extra-curricular and transition related activities.

A contest was launched to encourage students to use their mentors in searching for scholarships, obtaining feedback on resumes and cover letters, discussing issues of interest to individuals with disabilities, and inquiring about college selections or employment.

This year's final activity was a Career Exposition and Mentor Appreciation reception held on May 22nd. Teams of juniors and sophomores created awesome exhibits presenting their self-directed transition plans for college and/or employment and shared the tools they used to build an active transition portfolio. *(continued on next page)*

The Career Exposition featured the seniors, who have participated since the mentoring program's inception in 2005. Each senior presented a PowerPoint to showcase their personal "transition in action." Following the senior showcase, a reception honored the mentors for their dedication and tireless support of OSSB high school students as they make important transition decisions about their future. The exposition was covered by WTVN-Channel 6 News and the story aired on the evening news on June 4th.



OSSB Senior presents her "Transition PowerPoint."

The Mentoring Club looks forward to partnering with other organizations to create a network of mentors available to students. Our mission is to connect students with positive role models who will help empower them to reach their highest potential.

Message from the Superintendent

On June 6, 2008, the Ohio State School for the Blind completed its one hundred and seventy-first school year. What a testimony to Ohio's commitment to serving children who have visual impairments!

During the 2007-08 school year, one hundred twenty-six students were enrolled at OSSB. Thirteen seniors participated in the Commencement Program and we are very proud of the achievements these boys and girls have made during their educational journey with us.

- Thank you staff for your dedication and hard work to make this a safe, nurturing educational environment for our students.
- Thank you parents, for entrusting your children to us and supporting their educational experiences.
- And finally, thank you students for all of your accomplishments and your desire to learn.

The summer at OSSB will be anything but quiet as we host six summer enrichment camps, the Bureau of Services for the Visual Impaired (BSVI) Summer Work and Learn Program, and the BEST Summer Institute on Sensory Disabilities.

We will also be preparing the campus for the beginning phases of the new school construction. You will hear more about this as the new school year begins. Have a safe and enjoyable summer!

Cynthia M. Johnson
Interim Superintendent

Ohio State School for the Blind

Important Dates to Remember

August

- 25 Registration Day
Parent Teacher Staff Organization - 1:30pm
(all parents invited to the Auditorium)
- 26 First Day of School
- 27 Track Practice begins

September

- 1 Labor Day – No School
- 19-20 Track @ Home (w/Indiana, Kentucky, Missouri and Tennessee)
- 26-27 Track @ Indiana (w/Kentucky, Missouri and Tennessee)

More Health Class Fun!

During May, the high school Health class (studying environmental health) took a tandem bike ride on the Olentangy Bike trail to Mrs. Tolle's house for a healthy lunch. While visiting, they checked out her recycling system and composting of biodegradable materials. The roundtrip bike ride was about 7 miles of great exercise on a beautiful spring day!



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OSSB Mission Statement

The Ohio State School for the Blind, a publicly funded educational facility, is dedicated to the intellectual, social, physical and emotional growth of students with visual impairments, including those with multiple disabilities. Our mission is to work cooperatively with students, families and the community to provide an effective, enjoyable educational experience through specialized curriculum, equipment, material and individualized, disability-specific instruction to develop our students' unique potential.