

OSSB's Panther Paws Newsletter – March 2010

Greetings From The Superintendent

I am extremely proud of the performances of the Ohio State School for the Blind Marching Band (OSSBMB) and marching assistants while in Pasadena, California for the 2010 Tournament of Roses Parade! Their red, white and blue uniforms and the marching assistants' red blazers and black slacks were stunningly beautiful! While the highlight of the trip was their marching the 5.6 mile route along Colorado Boulevard, they also performed in other venues. They gave a concert at the magical Disneyland where students sang as well as played their instruments. Bandfest allowed each marching band the opportunity to play the songs they would be performing during the parade. It was quite an emotional scene to hear and see four bands from Ohio play "Beautiful Ohio" together. The OSSBMB was definitely a "Cut above the Rest".

I want to thank the band's co-directors; Carol Agler and Dan Kelley, for believing our students were capable of performing such as task, applying to participate in the Tournament of Roses parade and preparing the students for the march. It took much dedication, sacrifice and time commitment on the part of everyone at the school to make this event a reality! This trip would not have been financially possible had it not been for the many donors who contributed to the OSSB music program through the Parent Teacher Student Foundation. Almost immediately after the media was made aware of our band's participation in the Tournament of Roses Parade, we began receiving calls from individuals, businesses and service groups across the country. Without their support, this once in a lifetime experience would not have been possible for our students.

Finally, I must acknowledge the honors and recognitions the OSSB Marching Band received from the Ohio Senate, the State of Ohio Superintendent of Public Instruction and State of Ohio Board of Education, the Accessibility and Disability Commission of the City of Pasadena, and the Mayor of the City of Pasadena.

On behalf of the Ohio State School for the Blind, we will be forever grateful for this life-changing experience!

Thank You,

Cynthia M. Johnson
Interim Superintendent

The Braille Challenge

Christy Hubbard, OSSB Elementary Teacher

The Braille Challenge is a national competition for school-age children who read and write Braille. Hosted by the Braille Institute of America, this academic challenge is designed to motivate students in the United States and Canada in their study of Braille. Five contest age groups from grades one through twelve compete in areas such as spelling, reading comprehension, speed and accuracy, proofreading and chart and graph reading. This year, preliminary testing rounds will be held by March 12, 2010. Contestants with the top 12 scores from each of the five age groups nationally will be invited as finalists. Finalists are notified in early May, and are invited to the finals held at the Braille Institute of America's headquarters in Los Angeles, California in June.

My Braille Challenge Experience

Jocee Janicki, OSSB 4th grader

Last summer, I was able to go to the Braille Challenge finals in Los Angeles, California. I had so much going on that I will tell you some of the highlights. We took three tests. Reading comprehension, proofreading, and spelling. The proofreading was hard for me. That night, I got to see Scott Macintyre from American Idol at the awards. I got to have my picture taken with him, and it was cool. I didn't place in the finals, but I had fun. When we went back to the airport, I got to ride in a limousine part of the way! My friend's mom said if he placed, he would get to ride in a limousine. He took me with him, and I loved going. Making friends, and the test were a lot of fun and a lot more was fun too. I am looking forward to going to the Braille Challenge again next year.

Panthers Compete In Tennessee

Coach Shaw and Coach Maravola

Congratulations to all the OSSB Panther wrestlers and cheerleaders who participated in this years' NCASB championships in Nashville, Tennessee. The weather was wonderful and the wrestlers and cheerleaders performed great. A big Congratulations to Coach Brevick, Coach Miller and the Panther Cheerleaders for placing 2nd in this year's team competition and to the wrestlers who finished 4th. Cody McFarland won the 215lb weight class for the second year in a row. Congratulations Cody! Brandon Goddard ended up 4th, Reed Nicholson 2nd, Sam Shepherd 5th, Noah Beckman 3rd, and Charles Hill 6th. Thanks for a great season wrestlers! For complete results visit our webpage at www.ossb.oh.gov.

OSSB & OSD—Dr. Seuss Celebration

Janel Brown, OSSB Librarian

In years past, students from The Ohio State School for the Blind have attended Dr. Seuss Day at The Ohio School for the Deaf. Last year, after celebrating at OSD and sharing with our friends across the ravine, Mrs. Brown invited OSD

Librarian, Mrs. Kent to have Dr. Seuss Day here at OSSB in 2010. We would provide the venue; and Mrs. Kent would invite a guest reader.

Well, Mrs. Kent pulled out ALL of the stops, and our schools had the honor of having Senator and Mrs. John Glenn as our Dr. Seuss readers on March 2nd!! Senator and Mrs. Glenn read several Dr. Seuss books to the elementary students of OSD and OSSB, and afterwards, autographed previously purchased copies of LIFTOFF: A PHOTOBIOGRAPHY OF JOHN GLENN by Don Mitchell.

Meeting Ohioans who made history, was a once in a lifetime opportunity for our students, and we know that Senator and Mrs. Glenn enjoyed their visit with our students very much.

O&M Interns On Site This Winter

Rachel Smith, Orientation and Mobility

Let's welcome to our newest additions in the O&M department! We are lucky to have three graduate students from Western Michigan University working with our O&M staff to complete their Masters of Arts in Orientation and Mobility. First, with Mrs. Smith we have Michelle Szastak. Ms. Szastak is originally from Brunswick, OH. She has two dachshunds named Lucky and Rocky. When she's not at OSSB, Ms. Szastak likes scrapbooking, going to the movies and hanging out with her nephews.

Mrs. Jill Short is working with Mr. Northrop, and is from Rochester, New York. She traveled all the way to Ohio to do her internship because she heard about what a great school we have at OSSB! Waiting back in New York for Mrs. Short is her husband and her dog Oscar. Oscar is a German Shepherd mix who likes to do tricks. When she's not working on her internship here at OSSB, Mrs. Short likes to paint, do ceramics and cook. Currently she is working on recipes from Julia Child's cookbook.

Last (but certainly not least) we have Mary Ball-Swartwout working on her practicum hours with Mr. Wetli. Does that name sound familiar? It is Mrs. Swartwout who also works in the Residential Services here at OSSB! In her spare moments, Mrs. Swartwout likes to knit and watch movies. Mrs. Swartwout was born and raised right here in Columbus and she has two dogs, Dr. Pingpong and Spenser, two cats, Puck and Pippen and two freshwater fish tanks.

The O&M department will be lively with the three new faces of future O&M Specialists. Welcome aboard and enjoy your time with us ladies!

My Pasadena Trip

Misty Hatcher, OSSB Junior

I went on a lot of trips during my life like Atlantic City, NJ and New York City, NY, but my favorite one would be Pasadena, CA. I went there with my band around

when 2010 started. I did a lot of great things there like performing at Disneyland, having fun at Universal Studios, and the biggest of them all, marching in the 121st annual Tournament of Roses Parade. What a fun time we had.

The day after our flight was when we went to the "happiest place on Earth". That's right, Disneyland. First, the band had our west-coast-debut performance. I felt really ecstatic about playing at one of the biggest attractions in California. We performed songs from our half-time show as well as songs from our repertoire, including "Military Escort". Since we were in concert formation, we couldn't perform our "Script Braille Ohio". Some members of the choir sang a song called "With One Voice" and another version of "Sir Duke", which is part of the band's half-time show. I thought that we had an absolutely flawless show. I heard that we actually put one of the co-directors of the OSU band in tears, thanks to our magical sound. After that, we had a jazz workshop with a man named Alex. He is a superstar trombonist like Sam. Alex talked to us about syncopation, which is when a beat is divided into triplets. We worked on two songs, a jazzy version of "When You Wish Upon a Star" and a new song called "Chameleon", which gave me a feeling of *deja vu*, or did we really learn that song a couple of years ago? After the workshop, we got some time in the park. The only thing I really had time for was to eat. Luckily, we had more time at Universal Studios.

Speaking of Universal Studios, we went there on Saturday. I first went on the studio tour. I was excited to visit the sets of popular TV shows and movies. I even experienced special effects. My favorite of those would have to be the 8.3 earthquake. I was nervous at first, until I found out that it was just a simulation. After that, I saw a show called "Animal Actors". It had the different animals from TV and movies, including the dog from the "Bush's Baked Beans" commercials. The description said that animals ran the show, but the host was a regular human. After the show, I went on a ride featuring The Simpsons. It was a roller coaster simulation. Good thing I didn't have to spend any "d'oh" on it! That was my favorite ride. After that, I saw Shrek 4-D. It was so amazing, because normally with 3-D, it looks and sounds like I'm in the film, but in 4-D, it actually feels like I'm there. We deserved that trip after the band marched in the parade.

I will never forget when the band marched in the 121st annual Tournament of Roses Parade. We were the first blind band as well as, with only 32 members, the smallest. Even with our small size, we sounded like 300. We were actually one of four bands from Ohio. There were Pickerington Central's band, Ohio University, and "the best darn band in the land". I was filled up with energy from the crowd. I felt that it was so cool marching in a huge parade that is watched in about 90 countries around the world. I felt like a celebrity. It seemed like we would be as big as Lady Gaga. That was an honorable 6 miles that I can't believe we made that far.

During my time in Pasadena, I felt like I was famous. I knew that someday, we would be making history, and we did. I was kind of upset when I didn't have time for any rides at Disneyland. Overall, I was totally happy in Pasadena.

From Disneyland, to Universal Studios, to the Rose Parade, I thought that it was a great experience on the west coast. I would like to come back someday.

"Dancing with the Selzer's"

Joe Gehres, Residential Recreation Coordinator

Earlier this school year, I was approached by Terry and Marian Selzer about teaching tap classes in the evening to our residential students. Terry and Marian have over 45 years of experience as dance instructors; specifically working w/children teaching ballet and tap. They also have produced numerous (Off Broadway) productions here around Ohio and in adjacent states.

The classes started this past November and presently, we have 18 enthusiastic students involved in the program. The classes take place twice a month....usually on Tuesday nights. The goals of the class are for students to learn some basic tap steps, and to gain an appreciation for the art of dance. The tap students will be performing at the Spring Concert this May. The Bureau of Services for the Visually Impaired (BSVI) donated the funds to purchase the shoes. If you have any questions concerning the classes or schedule, please contact Joseph Gehres through the school office.

Boy Scouts Busy At OSSB

Donna Kortyka, Co-Leader

Hello from Troop 340! We have had great couple of weeks. We continue to work on the flag ceremony and advancements. The boys are doing a great job learning the scout sign, salute, motto, pledge, law and promise. We had our first popcorn sale. Thanks to all of those who supported us! We have had two pizza parties and have visited Suburban News, a local newspaper company. We learned about the importance of drinking water daily, how to tie a square knot and the different parts of the scouting symbol. Mr. Nixon, OSSB history teacher, graciously offered his time to help us learn about the American flag.

With the popcorn money, we were able to buy some of the uniform patches as well as our neckerchiefs and slides. Ms. Shaw and Ms. Salvagna helped us with our donated shirts and put a zillion patches on, all in the correct format. Okay, so maybe it wasn't a zillion but it was a lot of patches that is for sure. The biggest news, however, was meeting, in person the Chief Scout Executive of the Boy Scout organization, Bob Mazzuca. Yes, folks, he is the head of the entire American Scouting operation! He shook all of our hands and he let us tell him about what we are learning. He, in turn, taught us about our uniform and what some of the badges meant. It was a great visit and a memorable one at that. A quick reminder that Scouts can join any time. Come and have some fun with us. You just need to be eleven years old or older and/or in the fifth grade or above. Come and learn how to "Be Prepared" and to "Do a Good Turn Daily". See Joe

Gehres for details on joining.

McClain, One Of Ohio's 2010 Young Soloists Of The Year

VSA arts of Ohio recently announced the winners of the 2010 Young Soloists competition. The Young Soloist award recognizes outstanding musicians and vocalists with disabilities under the age of 25 with cash prizes and an opportunity to perform in front of community members and advocates. The winners were selected from a call for entries disseminated in the fall and adjudicated by three Ohio musicians and music educators.

OSSB Senior, Macy McClain won 3rd place, and she will be among those honored by the community at the 8th annual *An Evening with the Young Soloists* on May 1, 2010 at the Vern Riffe Center for Government and the Arts in Columbus. The Soloists will perform several selections and receive a certificate and cash prizes. Congratulations Macy, from the staff and students at OSSB! For more information, and to purchase tickets for this special event, go to www.vsaohio.org

Summer Camps And Spring Sports

Lauri Kaplan, Parent Mentor

Hopefully the snow storms are almost finished in Ohio, and students will soon be getting outside and participating in community sporting events and summer camps. If your child is interested in playing Little League baseball, check with your local leagues to see if they have a Challenger Division. Students living in Central Ohio have several leagues from which to choose—Challenger in Westerville, Buddy Ball in Hilliard and the Miracle League in Dublin and Muskingum Valley. There are other leagues across Ohio; it just takes a little digging to find them. Summer camp is another great activity to keep children engaged and active during the summer months. There are many options across the state, with special camps for the blind in Pennsylvania and Michigan. Contact Lauri Kaplan at OSSB for more information.

The Seeing Eye Visits OSS

Lauri Kaplan, with Phil Northrup and Kayla Rollison

Juniors and Seniors at OSSB attended a presentation in late October featuring Jay Stiteley and his guide dog. Stiteley is from The Seeing Eye in Morristown, New Jersey. OSSB Senior, Kayla Rollison wrote this about her experience: "At first, I wasn't sure if I could handle the commitment of a guide dog. Almost like a child, they require care, attention, and love. I find it hard to commit to just hearing the alarm in the morning, let alone a dog, but Jay Stiteley changed my mind. A guide dog can be a helper, a companion, and a friend. It can give you some of the

things you would never have without one. For me, this would be trust and confidence in another. So, I applied for guide dog school and will be attending the July summer session. To gain not only a guide dog, but confidence and independence.” If your child is interested in having a guide dog after graduation, feel free to check with his or her Orientation and Mobility instructor for more information about guide dog schools, and admissions procedures. More information about The Seeing Eye is available at www.seeingeye.org.

Quilting, With Ohio Artist Kate Gorman Nona Pierce, OSSB Art Teacher

During the month of February, OSSB K-8 art students teamed up with Ohio Arts Council artist, Kate Gorman, to make a collaborative fiber piece. Students learned a variety of hand-stitching skills, and used their new knowledge to make individually embellished blocks; these blocks were enhanced with built up tactile layers of stitches and hand sewn on buttons. Their blocks were then sewn together to form a background for a large OSSB Panther shape in the center, fabricated in the same style. The artist combined drawings by elementary students, combined drawings by elementary students, Hope, Yaqi, and Byron to create the unique and beautiful panther template for the fiber piece. Students have really enjoyed this experience; they are thrilled with having participated in creating a piece of artwork that will be permanently installed in the new school. Mrs. Gorman included the children in all of the planning, decision making, and creation of the piece; this was an activity that they will long remember.

Many hours of volunteer work were donated by elementary teachers and aides, so that the work could be completed during Mrs. Gorman's residency. A warm reception was held at the beginning of the month to welcome Gorman, and a goodbye assembly was held on Friday, the 26th. Students and staff had an opportunity to see and touch the nearly completed work.

Our eighth grade class was the core group for this project. The students include: Ariel, Kelsey, Na'Kita , Jerricka, Mia, Billy, and Bert. They have chosen to continue a unit in fiber making. They have already started to make fiber animal totems; our visiting artist began walking them through the process, and shared a variety of examples from her own work, and work from the collections of other artist friends. Ariel and her grandfather took the opportunity of a snowy weekend to make animal totems of their own at home and Ariel brought them in to share. You could see that they had a lot of fun with their project, and it was a wonderful extension of what we have been learning; always great fun to see how families extend learning at home. We have heard from a lot of the children that they have been asking to use sewing supplies at home!

Ohio State School for the Blind Important Dates to Remember

March 2010

- 12** NO SCHOOL
- 15-28** OGT Testing
- 19-21** Swimming & Forensics @ Indiana
- 25** Elementary to the Circus
- 29- 4/2** Close Up – Washington D.C.

April 2010

- 5-9** **SPRING BREAK – NO SCHOOL**
- 23-24** NCASB Swimming & Forensics @ Wisconsin

Farewell Friends!

Photos by Brendon Hamblin, OSSB 6th grader

At the end of December, OSSB bid adieu to two staff; classroom teacher Dave Lucas and food service manager, Robert Zoldak. Earlier in the fall we also said our goodbyes' to Gary Stanfill in food service, and Cynthia Green from custodial. We thank each of them for their dedication to our students and staff, and wish them well in the future!