

Ohio State School for the Blind

November 2011

Cynthia M. Johnson, Superintendent

Gerard Marcom, Principal

Message from the Superintendent

Greetings! I am honored to be appointed by the State Board of Education to serve as the Superintendent of the Ohio State School for the Blind (OSSB). The school has a rich history as the nation's first state supported school for the blind beginning in 1837. I am proud, along with our dedicated staff, to continue the legacy of providing an effective, enjoyable educational experience for students with

visual impairments in the state of Ohio. With your support and the support of the State Board of Education, the Ohio Department of Education and the State Legislature, we can help our students reach their fullest potential and to become productive citizens. To help us evaluate how well we are meeting the needs of our students, OSSB will take part in an accreditation process through the North Central Association (NCA) this school year. We will examine the quality of our educational programs and services. During this accreditation process your input will be requested through surveys and possible interviews. We look forward to working with you as we participate in this accreditation review.

Thank you for your continued support. We look forward to the 2011-2012 school year being the best year yet at OSSB!

Sincerely, Cynthia M. Johnson

OSSB remembers 9/11

Mrs. Tami Fisher

OSSB Leo Club and Student Council held a memorial ceremony this fall to honor the lives and heroes of 9-11-01. The groups planted a Sugar Maple Tree (the New York State tree) at the entrance of where the new school will be located. The Worthington Fire Department and a local police officer joined in our dedication.

Several students spoke at the event, a poem was read and a moment of silence was given for the lives lost on that tragic day. The plaque reads, "In memory of the First Responders on 9-11-01, and in honor of the First Responders in our community, the students of OSSB dedicate this tree. Thank you for your continued service, dedication, and safety you provide our community."

Students use iPad during Reading Class

Mrs. Robin Finley

This year, 7th and 8th grade classes are being introduced to the iPad as an educational tool to enhance reading instruction and increase accessibility for students with low vision. Mrs. Picard and Mr. Kelley are working in cooperation with Mrs. Finley to help students use this valuable and versatile technology. And the students are loving it!

Recently, Bookshare, a service that provides free books in several electronic formats, has unveiled a new application for the iPad called Read2go. Read2go allows the user to download books from Bookshare and read them on the iPad. The user can customize the font size (up to 70 point), change background and foreground colors and even use it as a listening device by activating the auditory function.

Students in Mrs. Finley's reading classes will be using iPads to read Edward Bloor's *Tangerine* as a class activity. Already, the motivation to read is increasing as students look forward to using these devices. For more information about using Read2go with the iPad, go to www.bookshare.org, or to www.read2go.org

Mrs. Brown Goes to Washington, DC

On a quiet Tuesday morning last May, Mrs. Brown came into work and got the surprise of her life: An email from the Library of Congress in Washington, DC announcing that: "The Ohio Library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped is the winner of the NLS Network Library of the Year Award for 2010... We at NLS like to have a representative of the patrons of the library to speak briefly about the value of the library service and congratulate them as winners."

On Thursday, June 23, 2011 Mrs. Brown stood before a group of librarians, politicians and other dignitaries to congratulate The Ohio Library for the Blind and State Library of Ohio for their hard work and dedication on behalf of every student at the Ohio State School for the Blind and the rest of their patrons in Ohio. It was a wonderful experience, and a privilege to attend and represent the Ohio State School for the Blind. Our school received many compliments for our Online Book chats, the percentage of students that the school signs up for service with the National Library Services Talking Book/Braille Book Program, and the beautiful Ohio Read poster featuring several of our marching band students.

New Teaching Staff Join OSSB

Mrs. Lauri Kaplan

We have several new teachers at OSSB this fall; let's get to know two of them! Say hello to Mrs. Michelle Wagner, an elementary teacher in our Multiple Disabilities program. A graduate of OSSB, Michelle is beginning her 14th year of teaching. Originally from Huron, Ohio, Mrs. Wagner graduated from Ohio Dominican University with a degree in Special Education K-12, and completed her Master's in Early Childhood Special Education at Ashland University. She and her husband Dan recently relocated to Columbus and are settling into their new home. Michelle enjoys reading, and working with the autism group she founded in Marion, Ohio.

Ms. Nicole Fadem is teaching Spanish to both high school and elementary school students. Fadem, originally from St. Louis is a huge Cardinals baseball

fan, who studied at Denison University and received her Master's of Education from The Ohio State University. Currently she is back at OSU pursuing her Teachers of Visual Impairment endorsement. Nicole says she is "a very avid reader and love reading absolutely anything. I am also passionate about fitness; I enjoy working out, spinning, aerobics, and running. I like to travel and enjoy cooking and trying out new recipes." She loves teaching Spanish, and is excited to be teaching to so many different age level students this year! (*photos by eighth grader, Brendon Hamblin*)

Leaf Exchange Program

Mrs. Tami Fisher

Several classes in the multiple disabilities program at OSSB participated in a leaf exchange program recently with other Blind Schools around the country. Letters, Ohio leaves, and an OSSB brochure were sent to 40 different locations. Students and staff are excited to get a return of leaves from other

areas around the country to compare them with the foliage we have in Ohio. As this newsletter goes to print, we have received leaves from Colorado, New Mexico, and Arizona and they are on display outside Mrs. Fisher's classroom!

Group Prepares For Last Trip as Seniors

Ms. Donna Kortyka

Get ready, because the annual Senior Fundraiser is right around the corner. This year once again we will be selling candles, food and dessert mixes, wrapping paper and other accessories for your holiday shopping with Celebrating Home. The fundraiser will begin in early November and will be back for your holiday gift giving. See a Senior class member to order, or you can also contact Donna Kortyka at dkortyka@ossb.oh.gov as well.

If you want to preview the brochure you can go to www.celebratinghome.com click give back through fundraising, then click brochures, then click full list

brochure. The profit will be 50% of the entire sale and it will go towards the senior trip at the end of the year.

OSSB Senior Participates in YWCA “Bright Futures” Ms. Lynn Boyce

Ayisha Sheikh was selected as OSSB's representative and participated last spring in the 2011 YWCA Bright Futures Program. The YWCA Program has been in place for 19 years and it is co-sponsored by Nationwide and YWCA Columbus. The aim of the program is to provide unique leadership opportunities for promising young women in the eleventh grade. The program seeks to advance eleventh grade young women who have the potential to make a significant impact on their school and/or community. Last year students from 29 Central Ohio high schools were involved in this program.

Ayisha participated in leadership programming on seven select Saturdays last spring, starting with a 2-day retreat at the downtown YWCA. The group visited the Mid-Ohio Food Bank (one of two Saturday service projects), and several service organizations. Participants attended the April 6th Women of Achievement Reception and Luncheon at the Greater Columbus Convention Center. According to Ayisha, "It was a good experience! We did some community volunteering which I hadn't done before, and we talked about the characteristics of good leadership, and shared our own feelings and views."

Silent Auction - December 20, 2011

Mrs. Patti Miller

The leaves have fallen and so it can only mean one thing...the holiday season will soon be upon us. This is a time of giving and charity. What better way to give than to help the students who travel the halls of OSSB on a daily basis.

Our annual Silent Auction will take place on December 20, 2011. As always, we need to ask for help from our families, friends and teachers. Donations of baked goods, crafts, or gift items can be made by contacting Tamara Fisher at tfisher@ossb.oh.gov , Patti Miller at pmiller@ossb.oh.gov , or call 614-752-1359.

We know that times are difficult financially for many families, but with time and creativity on our side, the Silent Auction can be a great success. All money earned will benefit the PTSO of OSSB and help our students to have a fulfilling educational experience. Thank you so much for your time and effort in this process.

Let's Move in School with Ms. Alison Brewer- Wood

Understanding the difference between physical education and physical activity is critically important to understanding why both contribute to the development of healthy, active children. Physical education, the foundation of a comprehensive school physical activity program, offers the best opportunity to provide physical activity to all children and to teach them the skills and knowledge needed to establish and sustain an active lifestyle. Physical education teachers assess student knowledge, motor and social skills, and provide instruction in a safe, supportive environment.

Physical activity is bodily movement of any type and may include recreational, fitness and sport activities such as jumping rope, playing soccer, lifting weights, as well as daily activities such as walking to

the store, taking the stairs or raking the leaves. The National Association for Sport and Physical Education (NASPE) recommends school-age children accumulate at least 60 minutes and up to several hours of physical activity per day and avoid prolonged periods of inactivity.

By participating in physical education class and doing physical activity, your children will reduce their risk for being overweight, assist in improved academic performance and help them feel better about themselves. I hope your family will join our Let's Move in School efforts!

News From The O & M Department

Mrs. Rachel Smith

Well it's time to dust off that cane and walking shoes and get back outside to cross streets, solicit assistance and navigate throughout the streets of

Columbus. Mrs. Smith, Mrs. Swartwout, Mr. Northrop, Mrs. Fast and Mrs. Cuniak are so happy to see all of the students back and eager to continue to learn their travel skills. We can't forget one of our important team members, Mrs. Johnson, who is also delighted to be working with her students in Activity Therapy/Pre-Mobility once again. New in the department is our intern, Michelle Jones-Moore who is studying Orientation and Mobility for Children through Western Michigan University. You may know her as our Physical Therapist, but she is broadening her horizons in the area of O&M to become a dynamic individual who can deliver cross-disciplinary service.

As you see, Rochelle, Mrs. Smith's Guiding Eyes puppy in training, is back with us again this school year until early spring, at which point she will go back to Guiding Eyes for the Blind in New York to receive formal training to become a guide dog. Training Rochelle is very similar to teaching our students. More success happens when the teaching is delivered with patience, kindness, structure and

expectations. She is a joy to have around. From the picture, it looks like she has her traveling paws on...good thing since her puppy raiser is an O&M instructor!

How quickly they change! Rochelle is pictured left as a 12 week old puppy, when she first arrived at OSSB. Pictured to the right is Rochelle this fall as a 10 month old, well on her way to her future career!

ABOUT GUIDING EYES FOR THE BLIND

“Guiding Eyes for the Blind, located in Yorktown Heights, New York, is a 501©(3) nonprofit organization and was founded in 1956 to enrich the lives of blind and visually impaired by providing them with the freedom to travel safely, thereby assuring greater independence, dignity and expanded horizons of opportunity. Since that time, Guiding Eyes has become one of the foremost guide dog schools in the world, graduating more than 7,000 guide dog teams. It provides superbly bred guide dogs, professional

training and follow-up support services to students at no cost to them and depends on contributions to fulfill its mission.”

COTA Bus Travel -- A Photo Essay

photos by Mr. Phil Northrop

Below are photos of 8th grader Brendon Hamblin on an O&M lesson working on independent travel skills and the COTA bus system, under the supervision of his Certified O&M specialist, Mr. Northrop.

NCASB Track and Field Championships

Coach Jeff Shaw

The following male athletes participated in the NCASB Track and Field Championships in Nashville, Tennessee on October 1, 2011—Donald Stewart, Jerrimia Williams-Smith, Kaleb Cutlip, and Seth

Petty. The boys scored 28 team points.

Individually, Donald, Class B, place 6th in the 60 meter dash, 6th in the standing long jump, 5th in the standing triple jump, and also participated in the 3 – consecutive jump. Jerrimia and Kaleb in Class C, participated in the 60 meter dash and the shot put. Seth, Class C, placed 3rd in the 800 meter run, 3rd in the 1600 meter run, 3rd in the long jump and 3rd in the triple jump.

Seth also gets his name added to the OSSB All Star list in the 800 and 1600 runs. Congratulations Guys!!

OSSB female athletes participating in the NCASB Track and Field Championships in Nashville, Tennessee October 1st were—Sarah Hawke, Raven Lewis, Tazhanae Johnson, and Michelle Motil. Sarah, Class B, placed 5th in the shot put, 6th in the 600 meter shuttle, 5th in the standing long jump and ran the 60 meter dash. Raven Lewis, Class B, placed 2nd in the standing triple jump, 4th in the 3 consecutive jump, 3rd in the 600 meter shuttle, and 4th in the 60

meter dash. Tazhanae, Class A, placed 3rd in the standing long jump, 2nd in the shot put, 2nd in the 60 meter dash, and 3rd in the standing triple jump.

Michelle, Class A, placed 3rd in the 60 meter dash, 2nd in the standing triple jump, and 1st in the shot put.

Congratulations to Michelle for breaking our school shot put record. The record was held by Kayla Rollison at 15' 5"; Michelle now holds the record at 15' 5.5". Michelle, Raven and Tazhanae also added their names to the OSSB All Star list for their track events. The girls tied for 4th with 79 points.

Congratulations Girls!!

Go to www.ossb.oh.gov under Athletics – Track to see how our students rate with the athletes from OSSB who have participated in track over the past 30 years.

Michael Tillis, Volunteer for the Center for Instructional Supports and Accessible Materials

(CISAM), has been repairing braille for OSSB and Ohio school districts since February 2009. Mr. Tillis repairs the braille as a volunteer representing the AT&T Telephone Pioneers of America, Columbus Life Member Club.

Mike has repaired 408 braille and expects to reach 425 by the end of November 2011. According to Mr. Tillis, "When receiving a braille for repair, it is often a challenge to restore it to working condition. I have found the usual mechanical problems with springs, levers and screws, but what I sometimes find inside of them has been interesting. It is not uncommon that I find a pencil, crayon, candy, or other items causing a problem. It has been my pleasure to serve the clients and I would like to thank the AT&T Telephone Pioneers of America, CISAM and the clients for this opportunity." - Michael Tillis. *Thank you Mr. Tillis!!*

High School Launches Anti-Bullying Campaign

Mrs. Pat Wilson

The end of September marked the kickoff of a scheduled year-long campaign against bullying at OSSB. All high school students and staff took part in the 2-hour workshop which featured an inspirational speaker. Spearheading the program are Mrs. Christine Croyle and Mrs. Pat Wilson, co-chairs, with Ms. Alison Brewer-Wood and Mr. Jim Peterfish. Students were divided into small groups of 8 and were asked to describe what bullying looks like. Their answers showed that bullying has many faces: hitting, pushing, kicking, name-calling, but also gossiping, shunning, starting rumors, and using technology to send hurtful messages. Most felt that bullying is not a serious problem at OSSB.

The featured speaker was Mrs. Shannon Mangon, of Thornville, who started an anti-bullying focus group, Rise Above, in memory of her 16-year-old

daughter Lauren. Lauren, who died in a car accident last summer, had been bullied throughout her life. Rise Above offers support for both bullies and their victims. More information can be found at www.riseabovelkw.com.

A second workshop was held on October 18. Students in Mrs. Tara McCarthy's vocational workshop program won first place in the slogan contest with a poster and buttons which said, "Take a Stand, Lend a Hand."

Mrs. McCarthy challenged the widely held viewpoint that bullying isn't a problem at OSSB. She named a number of behaviors classified as bullying, intimidation or harassment, and asked those who had ever experienced them, as victim or bully, to stand. Soon, most of the students were on their feet. A spirited discussion followed. Mrs. McCarthy challenged students to be proactive, to reach out and try to disarm a bullying incident before it develops.

Anti-Bullying programs are springing up in schools and other organizations all over the U.S. and

around the world. OSSB students and staff are hopeful that the monthly meetings will encourage everyone to take a stand against bullying, harassment and intimidation, and lend a hand stop it from happening here.

OSSB Celebrates Student Achievement

OSSB would like to congratulate those students who achieved Super Honor Roll or Honor Roll status for the 1st grading period of 2011-12. All Honor Roll students received certificates during a morning assembly held on November 11th. Super Honor Roll students maintained a 3.5-4.0 GPA and include Genene Blackwell, Billy Brandon, Whitney Bryant, Casey Campbell, Jazmine Colwell, Brianne Echard, Na'Kita Griffin, Whitney Hammond, DJ Hicks, Jocee Janicki Raven Lewis, Michelle Motil, Brian Rowan, Ayisha Sheikh, Hannah Siemer, Brandon Tolle, and Jerrimia Williams-Smith.

Those students who maintained a 3.0-3.49 GPA also received certificates, and include Shitaria Ballard, Eboni Bays-Holley, Crayton Benner, Olivia Bump, Joshua Byrd, Kaleb Cutlip, Kelsey Dailey, Sam Davidson, Dale Ellis, Amanda Gabbard, Brendon Hamblin, Misty Hatcher, Sarah Hawke, Rae'don Hayes, Tazhanae Johnson, Andrea Kerns, Tyler McKinney, Hien Nguyen, Jacob Nicholson, Amanda Perrine, Sam Shepherd, Ben Smith, Donald Stewart, Tim Tanner, James Wilson, Boniface Womber and Miranda Zultz.

Several OSSB students attend neighboring schools during part of their school day. Those students at Whetstone High School who earned **straight A's** during the 1st grading period include: Whitney Bryant, Ayisha Sheikh, Hannah Siemer, and Boniface Womber. Delaware Area Career Center South reports OSSB student Whitney Hammond received an A in Information Tech Academy 2, and Kaleb Cutlip received an A+ in his coursework for Food Service 1. Students of OSSB, you all make us proud!