



Ohio State School for the Blind



Alison LaBarre, Principal

Summer 2016

Denyse Woods, Interim Superintendent

Congratulations, OSSB Class of 2016!

Mrs. Lauri Kaplan



OSSB is pleased to present our 179th graduating class! Graduation was held on May 26, 2016 and **Dr. Lonny Rivera**, Interim Superintendent of Public Instruction, gave the class address. Several awards and scholarships totaling \$7000 were presented to seniors. Interim Superintendent **Denyse Woods** presented the *D.W. Overbeay Citizenship Award* to **Eboni**; Former Superintendent, **Dr. Lou Mazzoli**

gave the *William W. Bolsen Memorial Scholarship* to **Eboni, Austin, Ethan and Makalia**. **Austin, Ben and Makalia** received the *Columbus Northern Lions Club Scholarship* from Mr. Kirby Witmer, and finally OSSB teachers **Ceil Peirano** and **Karen Koehler** presented the *Cynthia M. Johnson Scholarship* to **Austin** and **Eboni** in memory of OSSB's former Superintendent who passed away last year after her battle with cancer. Class speaker, **Eboni**, ended the ceremony by encouraging her classmates to "buckle up and prepare yourselves for the most epic, bumpy, crazy, unforgettable ride of your life, because it begins now, **right now!**" Class of 2016, you have all left an incredible mark on our hearts. We wish all of the OSSB graduates and their families the best life has to offer!

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OSSB's Vocational Garden Program

Ms. Kate King

The OSSB vocational department started a new gardening program for students this school year. Steven Nagy, a local Eagle Scout and brother of OSSB student **Sydney**, created and built six raised beds for our students to use and learn valuable work skills. In May, students helped plant several types of lettuce, onions, basil, tomatoes, cilantro and other herbs. The goal of this project was two-fold. The first was to learn basic work skills, and the second was to incorporate more healthy choices into students diets. Students from around Ohio enrolled in OSSB's two-week career exploration and four-week Work and Learn camps, helped maintain the gardens during the summer. The vocational department is currently working with administration to provide an indoor greenhouse space, so students have a year-long opportunity to work on these new skills.



OSSB Senior, **Megan** works with **Ms. Bacon** to begin installing the new gardens. This summer, the plants are growing and enjoying their new space at OSSB.

Poetry Out Loud, Creating Confidence

Senior, Eboni Bays-Holley



Eboni competing in Forensics this spring.

This year I got the honor of being a part of Poetry Out Loud. Poetry Out Loud is a competition that requires all high school students to recite poetry out loud. The first year that I tried it I didn't do so great. The second year I did better than I thought I would. But the third year took the cake. By this time I knew what the judges expected. I knew what they wanted to see and hear. So I gave them the best that I could, and it paid off big time.

The day of Poetry Out Loud I got to school late, because I missed the bus. But my mom got me to school minutes before I had to compete. I was ridiculously nervous. My mind kept throwing pieces of the poems that I'd chosen at me. "Leaps on the back," "Floats down," "Escape me? Never!" "Dips his wing," My hands and knees were shaking. I had to keep reminding myself to breathe. I kept

telling myself that everything was fine.

"Once again welcome to Whetstone High School, and we hope that you enjoy this year's Poetry Out Loud!" My stomach was in knots the entire time. My eyes were all over the place. Seeing, but not seeing. There were two boys beside me, one to the left and one to the right. They were both really nervous. I think that's what calmed me down. The fact that I wasn't the only nervous person there gave me strength. Their nervousness gave me confidence. And once I had that confidence it was like nothing could touch me.

When it was my turn to go on stage my mind went blank. All of the words in my first poem disappeared. There was nothing but silence as my resource teacher helped me to the microphone. I stood there for seemed like minutes, but in reality it was only a few seconds. I took a deep breath in, let it out, and the words came rushing back. I was excited, but I didn't let it show. I recited my poem with appropriate 'dramaticness.' I didn't go overboard, but I did give it a little twist. When I was finished everyone started clapping and saying my name. I was back on cloud 9 again and this time I wasn't letting go.

The other students went and when they were finished we had a 10-minute break. My mom and my sister came over and talked to me. Just hearing them say that I did a good job made me feel like I might just move on to the second round. All of the other students were walking around, talking, and dancing. But I was sitting at the edge of my seat. I was perfectly poised, waiting, listening, and hoping. The top five students were announced to recite their second poem, and I was the first person to get called. With the assistance of my resource teacher I went up on stage again and recited my second and last poem. In this poem I knew that I could let all of my joy out. I knew that I could show everyone how excited I was through the words in this poem. So I did. My heart was overflowing with happiness. If I could have touched every person in the audience and gave them some of my joy I would have. I was just that filled.

After I was finished, the final four students went up and recited their poems. Everyone had an awesome poem. I started to get just a little nervous again. The what ifs came creeping back in. What if I skipped a word or two? What if I didn't have the right amount of expression? What if I don't place? Will everyone still be proud? The top three winners were announced. "Third place goes to..." I didn't make it. "Second place goes to..." I know I didn't make it, there's just no way. "First place goes to..." I lost, game over. "Eboni Bays-Holley!" I couldn't believe it! I jumped up and my resource teacher and I hugged. I was so happy. Everyone was clapping and screaming my name. I Eboni Bays-Holley had done it. I won.

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OSSB Senior Dinner-Greek Style!

Mrs. Kaplan with Mrs. Swisher and Brendon Hamblin



Good friends and Seniors, **Brendon and Sam** with Sam's mother and grandmother

This year's class of OSSB Seniors was treated to a special Senior dinner on March 22nd. Traditionally at the Ohio State School for the Blind, ninth graders prepare a surprise meal for the senior class and this year was no different! Students enrolled in Independent Living Skills (ILS) classes of **Ms. Honse-Sayna, Ms. Salvagna** and assistant **Mrs. Swisher** delighted the seniors and their guests with a delicious Greek-themed dinner. The ninth grade students were responsible for picking a theme, planning the food and music, decorating the school lobby, preparing the evening's meal and dessert from *scratch*, greeting the senior class and their guests, and finally serving their fellow students! Whew, they were busy!

OSSB Senior Class Advisors, **Mrs. Fisher, Mrs. Swartwout** and **Mrs. Finley** and retired ILS teacher, **Mrs. Fraley** stopped by to spend some time with the seniors—**Ben, Makalia, Brendon, Cara, Eboni, Sam, Vivian, and Donald**. Unable to attend were **Kimmie, Brianne, Ethan** and **Austin**.

According to senior, **Brendon**, the menu included hummus and pita bread, fruit, and chicken or lamb Gyros for dinner. Dessert was homemade cheesecake or baklava specially prepared by **Madison. Andre** was responsible for finding Greek music to enhance the evening. Other ninth graders involved during the evening were **Aujanee, Precious, Taylor H., and Yaqi**. Special thanks to **Olivia Swisher** and **Taylor W. and family** for helping in the kitchen, and with other special tasks. It truly was a team effort, and as **Brendon** said, "There were laughs and memories made, it was well-planned out and a great night!"



Photo above, students dressed up to help included L-R, **Aujanee, Taylor H., Taylor W., Yaqi** and **Precious**. Photo at right, **Taylor** and **Aujanee** help arriving guests find a seat.

St. Patrick's Day Fun

Ms. Laura Shearer



The K/1 class had a fantastic March! We celebrated Dr. Seuss day by reading all the Dr. Seuss books we could all day long! On St. Patrick's Day we attended the Shriner Circus and came back to our classroom to find a huge mess that a frisky little Leprechaun had made. We followed a path of shamrocks to our calendar and saw that he left one of his tiny shoes and what was left of his campsite! He had lit a fire in our classroom but didn't leave us any marshmallows! There were green coins and streamers everywhere. We took pictures of our green flashing hats, our shiny necklaces and **Josh** wore the St. Patty's Day mustache. Our Speech teacher, **Ms. Russell** and O&M instructor, **Mrs. Swartwout** made it so much fun! We had fun celebrating and trying to catch that little guy.



Top Photo includes a "selfie" of some of the K/1 students with their teacher, **Ms. Shearer**. Bottom Photo shows students, L-R **Brandon, Josh, Desha** and **Mikaia** with the Leprechaun's 'mischievous mess' that he left near their calendar.

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Poetry Out Loud

Senior, Eboni Bays-Holley

Maybe a month later I moved on to the regional semifinals. If I didn't place in this one, I wasn't moving on. During the semifinals we had to do 2 poems again. But this time I was competing against 22 different schools. I was nervous, but confident. I recited my first poem and I felt pretty good about it. After the other students went we had a 10-minute break. We got started again and everyone recited their second poem. Once again I went on stage and recited my second poem. I felt good! After everyone was finished we all got an award. And then it was time to pick the top six.

The top six would be moving on to the state finals. My stomach was in knots and my hands were cold and shaking. But again I was surprised and more than excited to find out that I made it into the top six. Two weeks later I went to the state finals. This time I had to recite 3 poems. Everyone recited their first two poems. And then the top six were chosen to recite their third poem.

I made it to the final round, but I didn't place after that. I thought I would feel hurt. I thought that I would be angry. But all I could feel was a sense of relief. I had fun while I was a part of Poetry Out Loud, and deep down I think that was all that I wanted.

Because of Poetry Out Loud I feel more confident in who I am. I feel more confident in my voice. During the competitions I got to step outside of my comfort zone. I got to meet new people and I think I might have even made a couple of friends while I was at it. I feel accomplished, confident, and new. And that's all thanks to Poetry Out Loud.

OSSB's Parent Teacher Staff Organization will hold our Yankee Candle fall fundraiser from **September 9-September 26, 2016**. Catalogs and order forms will go home with students on or before September 9th. The PTSO will profit **40%** from each candle or gift item sold, and you may order online through the end of December!!



Students Heat Up Kitchen In April Bake-off

Each year, students in OSSB's Independent Living Skills classes sign up for the Bake Off, with OSSB teachers and staff as the judges. Congratulations to all the students who showed their wonderful cooking skills! The winners of this year's bake off were:

Appetizer = 1st place Apple butter; **Connie, Laiken, Bryce**.

2nd place=Fried macaronic & cheese bites; **Ryan**.

Honorable mention=Easy Dorito Nachos; **Thomas**.

Desserts = 1st place Chocolate Toffee Haystacks; **Caiden**

2nd place **tie** homemade German Chocolate Cake; **Ana**, and Apple Dumplings; **Camden**.

Honorable mention=Fat Mans Pie; **Cameron**.

Main dish = 1st place Cornbread Pudding; **Brianne**

2nd place Brazilian Pizza; **Madison**.

Honorable mention= African Stew; **Ian**.

Bread = 1st place Choc Chip Bars; **Troy, Zack T., Peggy**.

2nd place Chocolate Caramel Cinnamon roll; **Awat**.



Above, is **Zack** with his 2016 Bake-off award for Chocolate Chip Bars made with his team, **Peggy** and **Troy**. Photo left shows **Ryan** preparing Fried Macaroni and Cheese bites.

"Hands On" at the Pet Store

Miss Libby Patterson

Miss Patterson and Miss Bailey's classes went to a local pet store on a community outing this spring, where we were given a wonderful presentation from one of the store workers named Brian. We sat in a semi-circle and Brian showed us various types of animals that they have for sale such as dogs, cats, bearded dragons, snakes, bunnies and more. We learned interesting facts about each animal and each student was allowed to feel the animals at their personal comfort levels. Decoda's favorite animal was the rabbit because it was "so soft!" We had a wonderful experience and really enjoyed the "hands on" trip! Thanks to Mrs. Kaplan for driving us!!



From Left: Kordell, Miss P, DeCoda, Brian and Kavon meet a ferret. Morgan explores a snake; Brian, Cara and Wyatt shown with a bearded dragon!

2016 OSSB Forensics Team

Mrs. Nicole Parrish

The 2016 OSSB Forensics Team had quite an exciting season! From our day meet in Indiana to the Buckeye Classic at home, team members honed their oratory skills and sharpened their competitive drives. This year's team consisted of the following students: seniors **Eboni, Ben**, and **Vivian**; junior **Brandon**; sophomore **Alex**; freshmen **Precious, Aujanee, Yaqi, Connie**, and **Madison**; and seventh-graders **Maggie** and **Ian**.



Coach Russell and Coach Parrish with the Forensics Team, their Second Place trophy and Eboni's award.

Our conference meet was in Tennessee on April 30, and a full team roster allowed our speaking panthers to approach it competitively!

- **Eboni** earned a perfect score in Humorous Interpretation and took first place in the event! She also took second place in Great Speeches.
- **Maggie** took third in Serious Prose.
- **Precious** took third in Humorous Prose.
- **Ben** and **Brandon** took third in Duo.
- **Connie** took second in Serious Interpretation.
- **Alex** took second in Eight-minute Speeches.
- **Yaqi** took second in Open Category (Current Political Speeches).
- **Vivian** (Impromptu) and **Madison** (Poetry) also ranked in various rounds, earning points that contributed to the team's total.

Overall, the team earned **second place**, narrowly inching out Tennessee by three points! During the awards ceremony for swimming and forensics, senior **Eboni** was also presented with the **Robert H. Thompson Award and Scholarship**. Due to her successful participation in sports, citizenship, and strong academic performance, **Eboni** was recognized as a superior North Central Association of Schools for the Blind (NCASB) student-athlete, and was honored in front of the entire conference as the sole recipient. It was a celebratory night, indeed!

Great job to all who participated this year! We look forward to having the team trophy and **Eboni's** plaque on display!

ASSE International Seeks Host Families for VI Students

ASSE International, a non-profit, volunteer based exchange organization (www.asse.com) is seeking host families for the 2016-2017 academic year, semester, and LCE Camp. Have you ever felt the desire to make a positive difference in the life of a young person from another country? Do you appreciate learning about other cultures and meeting people different from yourself? If you answered “yes” to either of these questions, then you may be just the right individual or family to host a high school foreign exchange student with ASSE.

Hosting an international student is a positive, life-changing experience. You will learn about another culture and have the opportunity to show hospitality to a citizen of another country. The relationship you form with your student will create a bridge between different nations and families, fostering international understanding and a stronger global community.

All students bring their own spending money and are fully insured, so the investment for host families is minimal. Families provide a room and meals to their host son/daughter; in return gaining a cross-cultural experience and lasting gratitude of a young person from overseas. ASSE currently has two wonderful students who are visually impaired available for the 2016/17 academic year – **Georgs** from Latvia who enjoys water skiing, animals, reading, cycling, skiing and ice-skating. **Vlad** from Romania plays piano, is interested in computers, listening to music and spending time with friends. It would be wonderful for these two youth to experience an exchange program in the United States!

Please reach out to **Marlene Holtz** with ASSE for more information. marleneholtz@hotmail.com
614-425-9358.

The **National Federation of the Blind of Ohio** (NFBOhio) has teamed up with Love Chiropractic to sponsor their first annual *Reading Braille for the Blind 5K Run* to be held on October 2nd 2016 in Plain City, Ohio at Glacier Ridge Metro Park. For more information or to register, please go to the website: Runfortheblind5k.itsyourrace.com.

According to the NFB of Ohio website, nfbohio.org, your tax exempt gift helps them “assist newly blind people and parents of blind children. They conduct a 2-week summer program to teach blind children Braille and the alternative skills of blindness and they offer scholarships to blind college students and work to pass laws to protect the rights of blind citizens. OSSB is not in any way associated with this 5k run, but we wish them well with this inaugural event, and hope to have OSSB represented at the run!

STABLE Account /ABLE Act

Mrs. Lauri Kaplan



STABLE accounts are new, and Ohio is one of only three states currently offering this investment account for eligible individuals with disabilities and their families. The ABLE Act (Achieving A Better Life Experience ACT) allows individuals to save and invest money **without losing eligibility for certain needs-based public benefits** like Medicaid, Supplemental Security Income (SSI) and Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI). Earnings in the STABLE account are not subject to Federal Income Tax **as long as** they are spent on qualified disability expenses. Once enrolled, you may request a STABLE Card, a loadable prepaid debit card to use like a credit card when making qualified purchases.

Individuals with disabilities who open a STABLE Account may save up to \$14,000 each year. This money may then be used for basic living expenses, transportation, education, assistive technology, health prevention and wellness, and more. For more information, please go to <http://stableaccount.com> or call 1-800-439-1653.

Walking for Rwanda

Mrs. Schwamburger's Class

The OSSB 5th Annual Walk-a-thon was held on May 13th, and Mrs. Schwamburger's class sent this note to their sponsors... "Thank you for sponsoring us at the Walk-a-thon! We all looked great and united as a school in our Walk-a-thon t-shirts. The weather was beautiful. It was just the right temperature with a nice cool breeze. We had a fun time. Individually we walked one to three miles with friends and teachers and as a group we walked twelve miles. Some of us even ran a bit. After each mile **Makayla** and **Miss Reid** did a little dance in front of the loud music. At the stereo we took a gemstone out of our left pocket and placed it in our right pocket to keep track of our laps.

We enjoyed eating ice-cream donated by Jeni's. **Mr. Kelley** cooked hot dogs on the grill and there were chips and drinks that some of us purchased. Two police officers on horseback came. We spent time petting Jack and Legend on their faces and soft noses. We have so far been able to purchase new uniform pads for the Goalball Teams at the Ubumwe Community Center and 12 more canes. We feel good about helping the blind students and gorillas in Rwanda! Thanks again for your generous donation. ~Trevon, Makayla, Qua, Aidan



Varsity Swim News at OSSB

Coach Grim & Coach Peirano

Congratulations to the Varsity Swimmers who completed a very successful season! They not only **won** the **Indiana Meet** and **Buckeye Classic** but also the **Conference Championship Meet**. With nine states competing, they won the girls, boys and combined team trophies. Even better, the swimmers were improving their individual times on different events throughout the season. This was especially exciting because we had a number of swimmers who were just learning how to swim!

The girls team included **Yaqi, Sarah, Maggie, Maddie, Taylor, Asia, Anna, Peggy,** and **Miranda**. Their combined efforts earned them 11 first, 3 second, and 8 third place medals and they were over 100 points above the 2nd place team. They were an extremely hard working group who always stepped up to the challenge.

The boys team included **Donald, Ethan, Thomas, Roy, Ian, DeCoda, Alex, Brandon, Ben, Evan, Caiden,** and **Camden**. They earned a total of 15-First, and 7-Third place medals. The coaches were impressed by how much time swimmers were able to take off their personal records at championships!



Photos by Michelle Tolle include the 2016 NCASB girls championship team, combined girls and boys team, and the 2016 NCASB boys championship team.



OSSB is once again partnering with the BEST Grant for this year's **Assistive Technology Family Conference** which will be held at the Holiday Inn Worthington, 7007 North High Street from 8:00am–3:30pm. This **free** one-day conference will feature Assistive Technology vendors focusing on braille literacy, low vision aids, writing, reading, and more. Vendors will answer questions and demonstrate equipment throughout the day. Breakout sessions will include vendor sessions, a parent panel, student panel, product demonstration and more. Registration closes on September 9, 2016.

To register, please go to: <http://www.ocali.org/project/at-family-conference>

For more information, please contact Lauri Kaplan 614-728-1567 or Julie Pashovich 614-410-1042.

UPCOMING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES

Supporting Students with Visual Impairment

Dates

September 15, 2016

October 20, 2016

November 17, 2016

January 19, 2017

Time

1:00-4:00

Contact Hour

12 hours

ACVRP credit pending

Cost

\$85.00

Register Online

<http://summitesc.org/>

September 15–

Understanding Visual Impairment: What is the Impact & How Can The Classroom Teacher Facilitate Successful Learning

October 20–

The Braille User in the Regular Classroom

November 17–

Practical Orientation & Mobility Strategies To Assist Students Who Have A Visual Impairment or CVI in Accessing their Educational Setting

January 19–

Meeting the Needs of CVI in the Classroom



No Refunds on Workshop Registrations

Questions? Contact Brenda Palinkas at 330-945-5600 ext. 511234





Beeping Easter Egg Hunt



OSSB Graduation - May 26, 2016



Elementary Music Science Fair



2016 Spring Concert



Friday Community Trips



Student Art Fair



**2016 Prom—
Photo courtesy of Justin Cale**



2015-16 OSSB Marching Band



OSSB Girls Goalball

OSSB Important Dates

(subject to change)

AUGUST	
August 22, 2016	Registration at Noon
August 23, 2016	First Day of School
August 29, 2016	First Day of Track and Field Practice
August 31, 2016	BAND to Charitable Campaign Kickoff Performance
August 31, 2016	BAND to Sweet Corn Festival Parade 6pm
SEPTEMBER	
September 5, 2016	NO SCHOOL —Labor Day
September 9-10, 2016	Track and Field Invitational @ Tennessee School for the Blind
September 9-26, 2016	Yankee Candle Fall Fundraiser for OSSB
September 14, 2016	School Picture Day!
September 16-18, 2016	BAND Weekend
September 21, 2016	Track & Field Day Meet @ OSSB
September 30, 2016	NCASB Track & Field Meet @ Indiana School for the Blind
OCTOBER	
October 1, 2016	NCASB Track & Field Meet @ Indiana School for the Blind
October 10, 2016	NO SCHOOL —Columbus Day
October 12, 2016	Bill Roby Games —Elementary Track meet @ Kentucky School for the Blind.
October 14-15, 2016	Goalball Invitational @ Tennessee School for the Blind
October 20, 2016	BAND to Circleville Pumpkin Show
October 26, 2016	Goalball Day Meet

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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.