

OVERBROOK SCHOOL FOR THE BLIND

TOWERS

VOL. 72, No. 2, JUNE 2020



PERSPECTIVES ON A PANDEMIC

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TOWERS NEWSLETTER

Vol. 72, No. 2, June 2020
Overbrook School for the Blind
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, USA
Established 1832

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EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE



Dear Friends,

We say it every year—this is a graduation like no other—because each year the graduation class includes uniquely talented students who will likewise create their own unique legacy in the world. But this year's graduation class is distinctly special, made so by the historic school closure in response to the pandemic. Although the graduation ceremonies were virtual, the ceremony was no less real and no less a positive turning point in the lives of young men and women who deserve this moment and many more in the future.

As graduates, I wish you all good things in the future. I know the perseverance and resilience you have shown these last several months can only mean that you will overcome whatever challenges you confront in the years ahead. I want to thank you for the many wonderful memories you leave with us. I also want you to know that you will always be a part of our community as alumni. The future students of Overbrook will no doubt be inspired by how you overcame these challenging times. I want to thank you for that, as well as your parents and staff who supported you.

The Class of 2020 is truly a graduation class like no other at Overbrook School for the Blind. I hope you take great pride in that.

Sincerely,

Todd Reeves

Executive Director and CEO

PERSPECTIVES ON A PANDEMIC

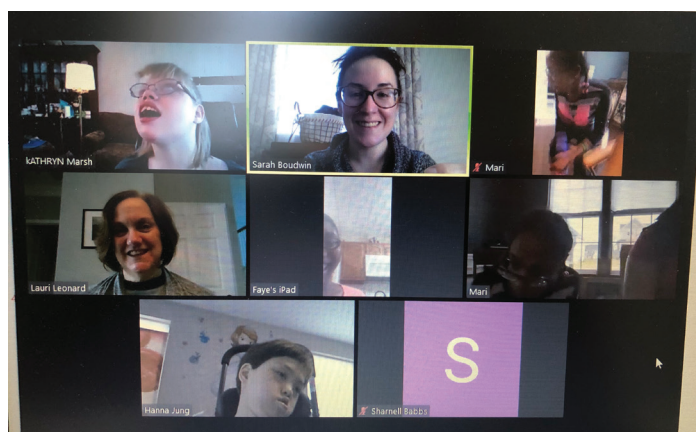
When the coronavirus pandemic swept in and radically changed everything overnight, schools specializing in the field of visual impairment faced a unique challenge. How do you meet the needs of students who are blind or visually impaired who, in addition to regular classroom instruction, often require orientation and mobility, physical, speech, and occupational therapy?



THE VIRTUAL CLASSROOM

"We focused on using a variety of formats for instruction as not all families had access to technology, and some of our students with significant learning issues needed physical, hands-on contact for learning," says Superintendent Jackie Brennan. "While knowing that distance learning doesn't work for everyone, the safety of our students and staff came first. Many of our students have significant challenges that puts them at high risk for illness. We sent home learning packets and materials and worked with the parents to set up individualized instructional plans that included therapies for each student. Teachers called parents to ask about the technology available in the home and to discuss ways to provide instruction in a manner that would work for each family. We sent home iPads, augmentative communication devices, picture and object communication symbols, and adaptive equipment so that each student had the appropriate support for distance learning."

For OSB teachers, lessening the burden of immediate homeschooling on parents was a priority. Several teachers and coordinators went the extra mile and delivered equipment and materials to a student's home if the parents were unable to collect them. A high school teacher drove over 25 minutes to meet a student's mother in a parking lot to give her an iPad loaded with apps, lessons, and resources when the family laptop was no longer available. When public transit was halted, a middle school teacher drove to the student's home to deliver an iPad and then stayed to teach the mom how to use it, six feet away from each other to



Middle school teacher Sarah Boudwin (top row, center photo) with Middle School Coordinator Laurie Leonard (second row, left photo) during a Zoom class session.

abide by social distancing guidelines. An elementary teacher noticed that it was hard to see a student during a Zoom video conferencing lesson, so she arranged for several pole lamps to be donated to the household which were delivered the following week.

In most cases, teachers and therapists provided instruction through Zoom video conferencing or Google Meets, and students did individual work, group work, and conferred with teachers daily.

Typically, middle school teacher Sarah Boudwin communicated daily with parents to provide resources for continuing a student's educational plan. "During a scheduled individual zoom session, we addressed goal content," says Boudwin. "We used interactive flashcards like Boom Cards!, GingerTiger, HelpKidzLearn, or other educational platforms that are available to our school students through a shared subscription."

After each Zoom session, Boudwin sent a follow-up email to parents that reviewed what was discussed and completed, as well as what needs to be prepared for the next session. Each week, she provided parents with a document that included updates from each child's physical/occupational/speech therapist and/or orientation and mobility specialist who joined the class several times a week. "They provided ideas to be used in the home, including tips and tricks to access equipment correctly," says Boudwin.

PERSPECTIVES ON A PANDEMIC

continued

Each day, the entire class participated in a virtual Morning Meeting where students like DeAngelo, who is deafblind, used a SubPac (a vest that gives the student sensory feedback through vibrations) loaned to him through OSB so that he could experience the morning meeting song with assistance from his intervener who interprets the songs and lessons for him. The class shared lessons from the Unique Learning Systems that addressed the PA Core Standards and helped families work on daily living skills in their home settings, completed a show and tell, and possibly practiced the new skill of donning face masks for time in public.

Special subject teachers offered live classes and also recorded lessons so that parents could access them when it was convenient. The OSB librarian Bernadette Giddens recorded stories in which she also provided audio descriptions of the pictures in the book. Sing-alongs with Music Teacher Jim Palmer were a great hit with younger students, and art lessons with Art Teacher Susan DiFabio, such as one on how to paint on bubble wrap, included a list of online websites that parents could access to find additional art supplies and/or use substitutions for the project.

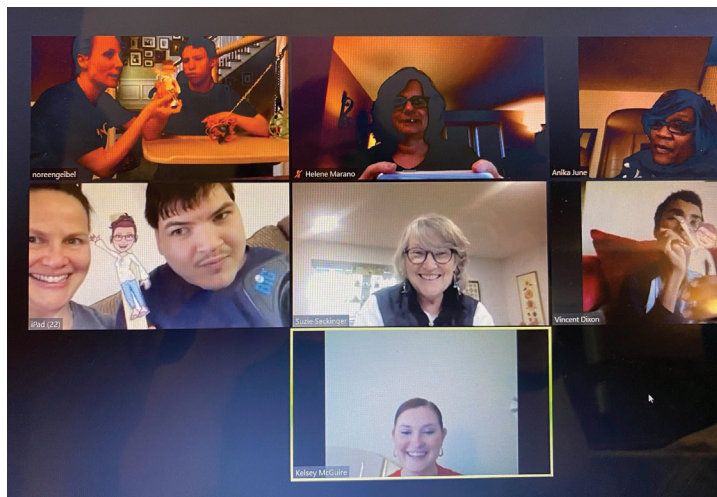
Even with all of this, the number one priority was checking in with students and parents to see how they were doing. Were they OK? How were they doing socially and emotionally?

"We offered the support of our behavior specialist, psychologist, and social worker virtually," says Brennan. "Our school psychologist established times to meet with individuals and groups for support for the remainder of the school year."

VIRTUAL OUTCOMES

Since OSB students have a wide range of abilities and learning needs, the response to distance learning was varied. Many of the older students adapted easily to distance learning as they had already been using technology to complete assignments, email their teachers for homework support, and to turn in assignments. Other students needed to access their technology through adaptive switches or specialized software

"Vicky (Aeryn's teacher) is truly amazing because she tries so hard and is a creative thinker who never gives up. We're so lucky to have her."



The high school students in Ms. Kelsey's (bottom photo) class made Flat Ms. Kelsey and took her with them on their daily adventures.

for screen readers or magnification. Some students with complex learning needs who may learn best through the use of touch found it difficult to learn through a distance learning platform.

Most OSB students needed the support of an adult to access the technology and to participate in lessons, and with the additional demands on parents, many currently working from home with their own children relying on them for virtual learning, teachers and therapists noticed a burnout.

"A completely deaf and legally blind child like Aeryn needs in-person engagement in order to learn," says Carolyn Eisner, mother of Middle School student Aeryn. "She's not so interested in the Zoom meetings we have, but we keep trying. Vicky (Aeryn's teacher) is truly amazing because she tries so hard and is a creative thinker who never gives up. We're so lucky to have her. All of that being said, Aeryn learns a lot by touching and she frequently then puts her fingers in her mouth. Not healthy behavior ever, but certainly not during a pandemic. It feels like all of this time out of school is time lost and probably time regressing. It's extremely frustrating."

"It was just too much for some families to maintain," says Brennan. "Some of our students needed hand under hand assistance and physical contact to learn tactile sign language so it couldn't be provided in a distance learning format."

As much as technology connects people, the coronavirus crisis casts a bright light on the deep inequalities in our system, not just in who has devices and bandwidth, which are critically important, but also who has the skills to self-direct their learning, and whose parents have the time to spend helping.

"Families are learning and understanding what we do, and it's helping them to better help their kids," says Brennan. "Our therapists, teachers, and paraeducators have become heroes to our parents in the process. I'm not surprised by the commitment, devotion, and heart of our staff, but it's always amazing to see how far they are willing to go for our kids."

The High School students in Ms. Eva's classroom kept a journal during the pandemic to serve as a time capsule of this historic time. Numerous journal entries were collected, and we've shared some of them below.

Gabrielle Zachwieja**4/14/20**

Journal Entry: Since the outbreak of COVID-19 everything has changed. I think the Government is doing the best they can to stop the spread of the virus. We had viruses in the past but none as terrible as this one. People have to stay home from work and all the kids have to stay home from school until the spread slows down enough so that more people will not get sick.

4/16/20

Journal Entry: There have been good and bad things about online school. We are trying to keep up with our studies, through Zoom and Google hangouts which are good and still working on assignments at night. However, there are a lot more distractions and interruptions, when learning online. As far as we know now, we may not be returning to school until next year. We really don't know. The governor may change his mind. It all depends on how the virus takes its course.

Louis Toole**5/22/20**

Journal Entry: I'm feeling great today. I'm excited for the four day weekend. Today is achievement day. I watched the video with a few of my classmates and we all got an award. I also attended the social club meeting. It was fun to talk to a few of my friends from school.

Marques Perez**4/23/20**

Journal Entry: I don't really like doing work at home. I still miss my friends. Yeah, I can talk to them but it's not the same. It's quiet in my neighborhood. I don't have a lot to do.

Angel Miranda**4/21/20**

Journal Entry: I had a good day. I played games and ate pizza. Every day is just like yesterday, but I am doing good.

4/24/20

Journal Entry: Today I am feeling well. I do the same thing that I do every day. I saw my sister, had pizza for dinner, and stayed in my room all day. I played games, watched YouTube on my iPad and then went to bed.

Ethan Ruddell**4/8/20**

Journal Entry: Working from home isn't as much different from working at school. The only things that change are I don't have a teacher around to help me with any problems I have as far as assignments are concerned. I'm also getting access to the Internet at home. Instead of talking to my friends face-to-face I'm using technology using Google Hangouts to talk to them.

4/9/20

Journal Entry: I was going to go back to school in the next month or so, but when mom told me the governor was closing every school in the country, I was really shocked. I don't know how long this virus is going to last, but hopefully, it'll go away by the summer.

6/4/20

Journal Entry: I have only seven days left of school. I hate to see my high school years end, but it is what it is. I've spent almost 4 months home because of COVID-19. I learned a lot from this new normal. For example, I learned that virtual learning isn't easy and it's not fun. I also learned that sometimes it can be very tedious on Zoom with a lot of people. I'm still hoping and praying that this virus will go away.

PRESENTING THE CLASS OF 2020



DANIELLE DECARLO

Danielle has attended OSB for the last 16 years.

Danielle likes listening to audiobooks, playing games on the computer, swimming, gym class, and socializing with her classmates. She has so many wonderful memories from her time here at Overbrook and the staff that have made these memories possible for her. Danielle has participated in Fall Fest, Fun Day, OSB's pumpkin decorating contest, tree decorating, school dances, Music Therapy and Musicopia. She has worked on-campus as a Greeter in the Kappen Aquatic Center, making deliveries, shredding, and making crafts for the School to Work gift shop and Overbrook Outpost.

After graduation, Danielle plans to live at home with her family and attend a nearby community supports program.

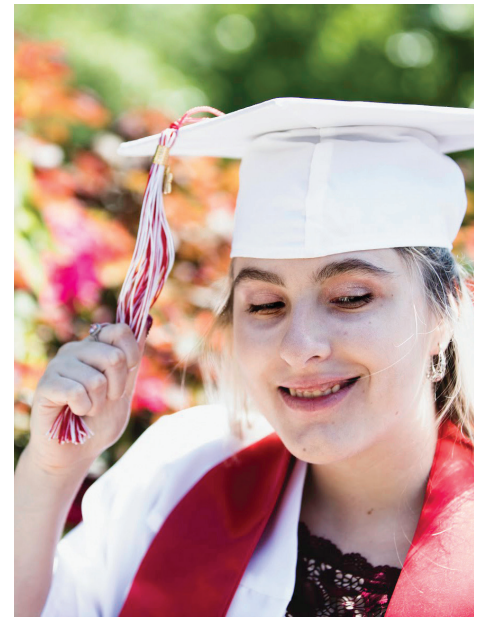


DAVID GOGISHVILI

David has attended OSB for the last 12 years.

David will cherish the fun that he had during Overbrook activities like school dances and Fun Day. He participated in the Fall Festival, Hoops for Hearts, and was a class representative on the Student Council two years. He has worked on campus in various ways like delivering newspapers, helping staff to shred documents, as a Greeter in the Kappen Aquatic Center, and has assembled and designed items to be sold at the School to Work Gift Shop and Overbrook Outpost.

After graduation, David plans to continue to do fun and enriching activities like swimming, music lessons, and crafts at local agencies in his community. He plans to reside with his family and spend time with his darling niece.



DANIELLE GRIFFITH

Danielle has attended OSB for the last 18 years.

Danielle enjoys listening to music and audiobooks, hanging out with friends, traveling, and singing. Her favorite memories include singing in Overbrook's Got Talent and receiving awards on Achievement Day. Danielle has participated in Cheerleading, Choir, Bellchoir, Ladies of Overbrook, Swimming, Goalball, and Track and Field. She worked on-campus in the Pawprint Shop, Farm to Table, and the Huskies Café. Off-campus, she has worked at Coldstone Creamery, the Overbrook Outpost, Walgreens, and Vision Corps.

After graduation, Danielle would like to receive further vocational training with the hopes of working in a call center.



TIMOTHY MAENNER

Tim has attended OSB for the last 14 years.

Tim participated in the Mixed Choir and Track and worked at the Snack Bar, Pawprint Shop, Office of Technology, and Huskies Café. Tim worked as the High School Weatherman and also was responsible for checking in the buses in the morning. Off-campus, Tim worked at the Lighthouse Café, Coldstone Creamery, and Vision Corps.

Tim really enjoys sports and music, especially Bruce Springsteen. He *loves* ice hockey so he really enjoyed skating with the Philadelphia Flyers and his classmates last year. He has many fond memories of his time at Overbrook, specifically the music concerts, track meets and trips with the team, living at White Hall, and the proms. Tim’s favorite prom memory was when his prom and his brother’s prom were both on the same night, and Tim and his brother and their dates all took pictures together before the prom. Tim plans to work after graduation.



NICHOLAS MANGANO

Nicholas has been at OSB for all of his education. He began in our Early Intervention program with home-based services.

Nicholas loves to socialize. Some of his favorite things to do at school are participating in class discussions, working on the smartboard, cheering at sports events, and encouraging his classmates. Nicholas loves to add his sense of humor to situations.

During his time at Overbrook, Nicholas enjoyed many activities such as music therapy, Fun Day, and the prom.

After graduation, Nicholas plans to attend a day program and live at home with his family. Nicholas plans to continue to participate in some of his favorite activities like going for walks.



LEXIS MORATH

Lexis has been a student at OSB for the last 16 years.

Lexis has fond memories of the dances at OSB, Spirit Week, Fun Day, and the Prom. She participated in Fun Day, the Fall Festival, the Prom, and Hoops for Hearts. Lexis has worked on-campus in the Workshop, Pre-Voc, in the School to Work Day Program, and as a Greeter at the Kappen Aquatic Center.

After she graduates, Lexis plans to continue developing her skills at St. Edmond’s Home for children and then transition to an adult program.

PRESENTING THE CLASS OF 2020

continued



KIAUNA SMITH

Kiauna has attended OSB for 14 years.

Kiauna loves to listen to music, watch YouTube videos, do makeup, and style hair. Her favorite OSB memories include participating in Overbrook's Got Talent and attending the Prom. While at Overbrook, Kiauna participated in cheerleading, Voices of Overbrook, Bell Choir, Ladies of Overbrook, Track and Field, and the Nutrition Committee. She has worked on-campus at the Huskies Café, Farm to Table, Pawprint Shop, and Snack Bar. She has worked off-campus at Corner Bakery, Overbrook Outpost, and the Couch Tomato Cafe.

After graduation, Kiauna would like to receive further training in cosmetology and plans to work in a hair salon.



MARGARET WATSON

Maggie has attended OSB for the last 18 years.

Maggie has enjoyed participating in sensory exploration activities, listening to audiobooks and music, playing games on the computer, art activities, gym, and socializing with her friends. She has so many wonderful memories of Overbrook and the staff that have interacted with her over the years. Maggie has participated in the Fall Festival, Fun Day, school dances, holiday tree trimming, pumpkin decorating contests, Musicopia, and Music Therapy. She has worked on campus making deliveries, shredding, as a Greeter at the Kappen Aquatic Center, and made crafts for the School to Work Gift Shop and the Overbrook Outpost.

After her graduation, Maggie plans to continue developing her skills at St. Edmond's Home for Children and spend time with her family.



LATOYA WILLIAMS-GAUSE

Latoya has attended OSB for the last 17 years.

Latoya enjoys listening to audiobooks and music, playing games on the computer and iPad, and socializing with her classmates. Latoya has so many wonderful memories of her time at Overbrook. She has participated in the Fall Festival, Fun Day, pumpkin and tree decorating, Wing Bowl, school dances, Music Therapy, and Musicopia. Latoya has worked on-campus recycling, folding towels, greeting people at the Kappen Aquatic Center, making deliveries, shredding, and making crafts for the School to Work gift shop and Overbrook Outpost. She worked off-campus at the Overbrook Outpost.

After graduation, Latoya plans to participate in a community supports program and spend time with her family.

MOVING UP

With pride and pleasure, we celebrated each and every one of our hard-working, awesomely-achieving Early Childhood students during our first-ever virtual Moving Up Ceremony. Best of luck to these sweet faces as they move on to other adventures in learning.



CORTICAL VISUAL IMPAIRMENT CLINIC



A CVI Assessment is performed by CVI Consultant Beth Ramella. CVI Assessments are performed in the dark or low light to create a simplified visual environment so the child may focus attention on a single visual stimulus.

Before the shutdown, there was a remarkable day on campus for OSB and for a two-year-old boy from Qatar named Tamin.

For OSB, Tamin was the first international student to be seen in our Cortical Visual Impairment Clinic. Born with cortical malformations and presenting with developmental and physical delays, Tamin was being treated by a neuro-ophthalmologist at Children’s Hospital of Philadelphia (CHOP) who referred the family to Overbrook for an assessment and to make recommendations for the family.

“We were eager to see him because early intervention makes a significant difference,” says Beth Ramella, CVI Consultant. “The purpose of the evaluation was to gain an understanding of Tamin’s current skills and how his functional vision use affects them, as well as to pass along recommendations to his family and educational team about measures they could take to support his progress at home, and eventually, at school.”

CVI is the result of an injury to the brain or a neurological disorder. It can be from lack of oxygen, trauma, stroke, or brain hemorrhage, or due to a congenital brain anomaly. The visual impairment does not exist in the eye itself but in the brain. The structures of the eye, including the optic nerve,

are healthy, so the problem is in the transmission from the brain to the eye, therefore, children with CVI can see but have difficulty understanding what they are seeing.

Ramella performed a CVI Range Assessment (Roman-Lantzy, 2018), an educational functional visual assessment where she had Tamin look at various items in settings with different lighting and levels of sound, and interviewed Tamin’s parents to collect information. Tamin’s parents, Fahad and Sarah, spoke minimal English but the language barrier was mitigated by an Arabic interpreter who translated over a speakerphone during the assessments.

“After the assessments, we provided a comprehensive report for Tamin’s parents to help them understand how he sees best,” says Ramella. “We included a range of educational strategies and accommodations to help him improve his skills and provided suggestions to set up or change his environment at home. This is very valuable because the family can then share the report with Tamin’s educational team in Qatar and use it to develop an appropriate and Individualized educational plan for his future.”



CVI Consultant Beth Ramella evaluates Tamin while his parents, Sarah and Fahad, sit nearby.

Ramella shared a lightbox, a black bifold board, and some simple colorful visual targets (red beads, a mylar balloon, a fluorescent green slinky) for practice at home.

When the visit was over, Tamin's parents were clearly happy with the assessments and Ramella's report.

"Wonderful," said Sarah, in perfect English.

In Arabic, Tamin's father spoke, and the translation was, "You give us hope."

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"We were eager to see him because early intervention makes a significant difference."

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TEN CHARACTERISTICS OF CVI

(Dr. Christine Roman-Lantzy, 2018).

1. **COLOR PREFERENCE:** The child may have a strong attraction to targets of a particular color. Even if there isn't a preferred color, the use of vibrant, highly-saturated colors alerts and maintains attention.
2. **NEED FOR MOVEMENT:** The child prefers toys that move, or objects with shiny, reflective surfaces that create the illusion of movement.
3. **VISUAL LATENCY:** The child's visual responses may be slow or delayed when looking at objects.
4. **VISUAL FIELD PREFERENCES:** The child may ignore information presented in certain areas of their visual field, or they may turn their heads to view objects from a particular portion of their field of view.
5. **DIFFICULTY WITH VISUAL COMPLEXITY:** Initially, children with CVI may respond to objects with simple patterns or color. Complexity changes as children develop more vision. Children with CVI who are able to locate targets in a picture or reading words on a page may need a reduction of targets on the page for success.
6. **LIGHT GAZING AND NON-PURPOSEFUL GAZE:** The child is attracted to light, natural or artificial, and may spend prolonged periods of time just gazing at sources of light. Additional lighting from a backlit device may be beneficial to a child with CVI.
7. **DIFFICULTY WITH DISTANCE VIEWING:** The child may present as if they are highly nearsighted by positioning objects very close to their face. This characteristic deals directly with complexity.
8. **ATYPICAL VISUAL REFLEXES:** The child may have an atypical blink reflex and visual threat response.
9. **DIFFICULTY WITH A VISUAL NOVELTY:** The child may ignore objects that are new, preferring targets that they have viewed over and over.
10. **ABSENCE OF VISUALLY GUIDED REACH:** The child may be unable to look and reach simultaneously. Reducing complexity may help a child develop a more accurate visually guided reach.

OSB BRIEFS

NEW MEMBERS OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES

We are pleased to welcome two new members to the OSB Board of Trustees.

Elizabeth Smith Campana is a Vice President at Bernstein Wealth Management and previously was the Associate Director of Development for Major Gifts at Villanova Law School. She is a graduate of Villanova Law and Denison University and is a Baldwin School graduate. Ms. Campana serves on the Board of the Radnor Conservancy and the Baldwin School Alumnae Association. She currently lives in Bryn Mawr with her husband and toddler son, Logan.

OSB Parent **Marquitha K. Gilbert** has worked at Merck & Co. for over 21 years. Her roles at Merck have ranged from sales, training, marketing and sales support, sales force effectiveness, business consulting, account management strategy, new role integration, and communications and leadership roles in Human Resources/Global Learning & Development. Ms. Gilbert has a Six Sigma Green Belt and is a Certified Project Manager through the Project Management Leadership Group. She also leads the local chapter of the capABILITY Employee Business Resource Group. She has a Master's in International Health & Development from Tulane School of Public Health and Tropical Medicine and a Bachelor of Science in Chemistry from Norfolk State University.

Congratulations, new board members! We look forward to working with you.



Elizabeth Smith Campana



Marquitha K. Gilbert

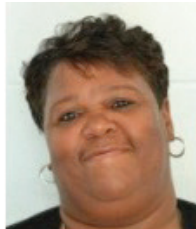
CONGRATULATIONS TO OUR RETIREES!

Thank you for being tireless professionals, helpful coworkers, and good friends.

You will be remembered for all of the wonderful things that you did here at OSB.



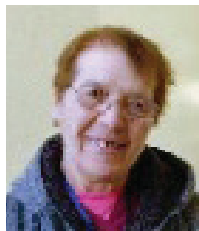
Robert "Bob" Ashbridge, Transition Coordinator: 39 years, 5 months



Donna DeShazo, ParaEducator, High School: 31 years, 7 months



Maryann Flack, Development Records/Research Associate: 39 years, 3 months



Rosaria P. Gil, Housekeeper, 23 Years, 9 months



Michele McCallion, High School/Teacher of the Visually Impaired: 32 years, 9 months

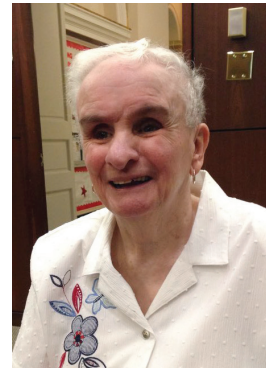
IN MEMORIAM

Peggy Garrett (Class of 1951)

An alumna and member of the Board of Trustees, Peggy was a great friend to many on staff at OSB. She attended every concert, fundraiser, and event that in any way helped the students and staff at OSB.

A Master Gardener from Penn State University's Horticulture Program, Peggy was the leader of the Hands-On Gardeners of the Associated Services for the Blind (ASB), a group that contributed to tending the gardens and flower beds outside of OSB's Nevil Center. She loved all things "green," and said in an interview with Towers in 2015, "It's so good for the students to touch, smell, and enjoy the plants, so good for their spirit. When I was a student here, I used to say that I go to school in a park."

Peggy passed away in January.



Edward (Ed) Glavin (Class of 1972)

An alumnus of OSB, Ed worked in the food industry for 30 years at M&M Restaurant Supply before moving into retail management at Target for ten years. Ed was fascinated with lighthouses, loved visiting the ocean, and was an avid reader. He participated in the Multiple Sclerosis fundraising walks, Meals On Wheels, and the Delaware Valley Blind Bowlers Association for 15 years.

Ed passed away in May.

THE POWER OF ZERO

The M. Christine Murphy Horticulture Education Center (MCMHEC) has received a Zero Energy Certification making it the second Zero Energy-certified project in Pennsylvania.

"Greenhouses are remarkably hard to achieve Zero Energy," says Angela Iraldi, from Re:Vision Architecture, the Sustainability Consultants for the MCMHEC project. "From our research, the solar power system on the Nevil Field House roof generated 192% of the greenhouse's energy needs after just one year of operation."

With support from our partners, specifically the Green Mountain Energy Sun Club and the Rosenblatt Family, the MCMHEC is the sixth project in Pennsylvania to achieve an International Living Future Institute (ILFI) Certification and is the 14th school building in the world to achieve Zero Energy Certification.

Designed by Daley & Jalboot Architects, Inc., the MCMHEC houses OSB's Horticulture Therapy and Farm to Table programs, and students use the greenhouse for occupational and education therapy as they grow nutritious food for the student cafeteria, learn plant care, and experience plants in multi-sensory ways.



VIRTUAL EVENTS

In addition to addresses from Executive Director and CEO Todd Reeves and Superintendent Jackie Brennan, the virtual graduation ceremony included a digital mosaic of photographs and musical selections from Music Teacher Jim Palmer and Choir Director Christopher Sapienza. The virtual prom included a special guest appearance by former music teacher and professional musician, John Grecia.

"While we were disappointed that the current situation prevented us from having an in-person graduation and other celebratory activities, we are grateful for the collaborative work of our teachers and staff to produce several virtual opportunities for recognition and celebration, such as Achievement Day, the Sports Banquet, the Prom, and of course, our graduation ceremony," said Superintendent Jackie Brennan. "Our seniors worked so hard during their academic career, and it was important to provide them with experiences that celebrate their tremendous accomplishments."

We all enjoyed the virtual collage of praise, congratulations, and thanks!



WELCOME TO OUR NEW BEHAVIOR SUPPORT SPECIALIST

CHAREE PARKER, M.S., LBS

Ms. Parker received her Bachelor of Arts from Temple University in Organizational Communication. She obtained her Masters of Science in Behavior Management and Justice as well as a Post Masters in Behavioral Analysis from Saint Joseph's University. Ms. Parker is a Licensed Behavior Specialist in the State of Pennsylvania. Additionally, she is also a certified FBA (functional behavioral assessment) Trainer for the Bureau of Autism Services.

Explain to us your role as OSB's Behavior Support Specialist.

In my role as a Behavior Support Specialist, I work as part of our interdisciplinary team to offer behavior support to students and teachers. Behavior supports vary from consultations to functional assessments and positive behavior support plans.

What attracted you to working at OSB?

I have always had a passion for the Education and Behavioral Health sectors to become integrated in a more standardized manner. The mental and behavioral health of our students is just as important as their educational rights. I felt that OSB embodied this vision when deciding to offer this role as an additional resource within its community.

What are your short-term and long-term goals at OSB?

My short-term goal is to continue to build rapport. My long-term goal is to effect positive behavior change in students and staff to foster a cohesive environment.

What are you most excited about in your new role?

I am most excited about working with so many people who are seasoned to OSB. There is never a shortage of people sharing their positive experiences.

How has the pandemic changed or affected your role?

Prior to the pandemic, I was six months into my new role. I was just getting acclimated to the large campus, staff, and students. I enjoyed seeing the beauty of the campus and had looked forward to seeing the outdoor seasonal transformation.

Fill in the blank: If you really knew me, you'd know... I am very analytical! I like to know what I am facing by looking at the whole picture before I dive into anything. I am married with two daughters, ages 14 and 11 years old.

Charee Parker can be reached at charee.parker@obs.org.



JOIN US ON OCTOBER 8, 2020 FOR **OVERBROOK SCHOOL FOR THE BLIND'S FIRST VIRTUAL GALA: EXPERIENCE OVERBROOK**



**EXPERIENCE
OVERBROOK**
A VIRTUAL
EXPERIENCE

Guests will “experience” our gala a little differently this year, but the purpose remains the same: To join as a community to support OSB’s Mission and the students we serve.

The evening will include:

- An online auction
- An interactive virtual program
- Other exciting surprises!

Guests are encouraged to create their own cocktails and support a local restaurant by ordering in. No need to dress up this year, just get comfortable and enjoy the Experience!

All proceeds from Experience Overbrook will benefit OSB programming.

More details to be announced.

Be sure to visit our website at www.obs.org and our Facebook page @OverbrookSchoolfortheBlind frequently for updates.

Questions? Contact Betty Tsarouchis in Development at btsarouchis@obs.org.



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Have Fun and Stay Safe **This Summer**

We will continue to follow the guidance of the Governor, the PA Department of Education, and the PA Department of Health, and will host the Extended School Year (ESY) Program and Early Childhood Program virtually so that OSB students can continue to engage in activities designed to maintain, reinforce, and enrich their skills over the summer. The ESY Program begins on July 6th and continues until August 6th. The Early Childhood Summer Program begins on July 6th and concludes on August 13th.

Please continue to visit our website during the summer for more updates about programs and schedules.
Visit www.obs.org.

