



OVERBROOK SCHOOL FOR THE BLIND

VOL. 70, No. 6, SUMMER 2017

TOWERSNEWS



THE CLASS OF 2017 CELEBRATES 185 YEARS OF OSB HISTORY!

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TOWERS NEWSLETTER
Vol. 70, No. 6, Summer 2017
Overbrook School for the Blind
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, USA
Established 1832

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EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S

MESSAGE

By Gerald Kitzhoffer



Having some fun with the OSB Huskie on History Day.

Dear Friends:

As I compose this, my final newsletter "letter", I'm struck by how fast these past nine years have gone. Overbrook has faced some challenging times and many moments worth celebrating throughout this period. We have lost some beloved staff and students, faced some significant funding issues, and encountered political turmoil resulting in less emphasis on our school as a viable alternative for students with blindness, visual impairment and additional disabilities. Yet, despite these events, Overbrook School for the Blind continues to thrive. Our students have overcome the obstacles in their lives and achieved a great education, our staff continued to motivate and inspire, and we have worked our way through the financial difficulties to ensure Overbrook's future. We have conquered these challenges because we have a great mission and purpose. We also have had a lot of help in fostering and supporting that mission. And for that I thank each and every one of you. No matter the nature of your affiliation with our great school, we know that you are there to help us tell the story of student success and institutional progress. Keep up the good work!

And now, in closing, even though my role is changing in the future, I am looking forward to hearing about the great work that Overbrook will continue to do. Thank you for all your help and support over the years.

Take care.

"Mr. K"

Gerald Kitzhoffer, *Executive Director and CEO*

Thank You, Mr. K

We are grateful for your dedication & nine remarkable years of service at OSB. Here's to a well-deserved & happy retirement!



Jerry collected trophies for OSB from an EAAB tournament.



Jerry with (left to right) ParaEducator Shannon Walsh, Transition Secretary Clare Medori, Transition ParaEducator Beth Ann Barr-DiFabio, and Transition Instructor Justine Binck, at his retirement party.



Members of the OSB Board of Trustees and a few staff members join Jerry for a group photo at the last board meeting.



Jerry with (left to right) HR Specialist Carmelina Arias-Torres, HR Coordinator Michael C. Mansor, and HR Manager Carol Havens-Dobbs



Jerry with students from the Early Childhood Program.

PRESENTING the class of 2017

TO OUR GRADUATES:

We are proud to have known you as students and look forward to you remaining part of the Overbrook School for the Blind family as alumni. We are confident you will never cease to confront life's challenges with grace and fortitude.

Look back with a smile and go forward with courage. Congratulations!



STEPHANIE ALGARIN DIAZ



SHERRITA BLACKWELL



CHRISTIAN CHILDS



MEGAN ERHARD



JAZLYN MORALES



JUSTIN MORRISSEY



MADELINE NOBLES



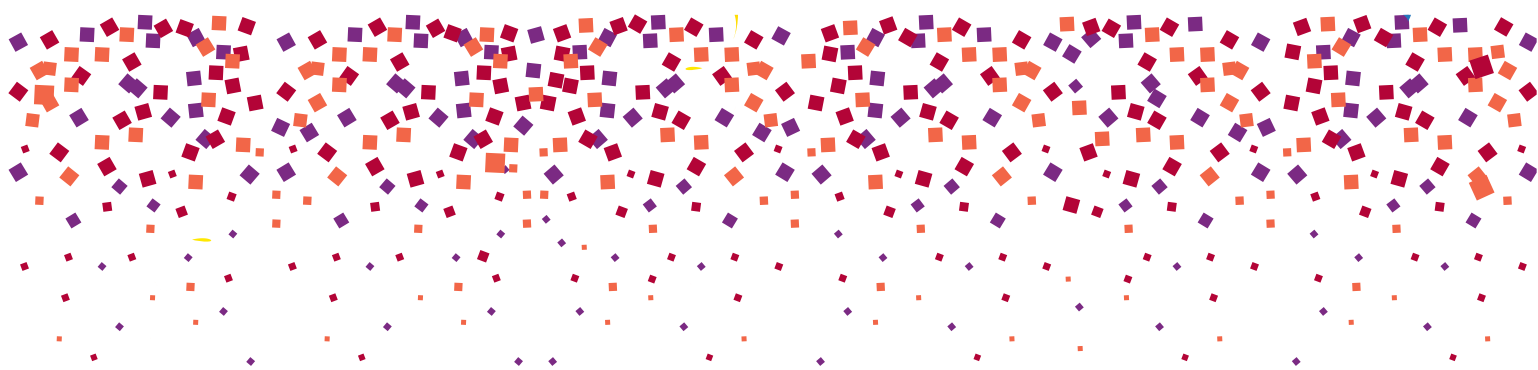
JACOB PRATT



CRISTIAN SANCHEZ-PAULINO



SHANIYAH SCOTT



COMMENCEMENT



Peers, family members and friends shared in the joyous OSB Commencement ceremony that celebrated the academic accomplishments of our ten graduates. OSB Executive Director Jerry Kitzhoffer and OSB Board of Trustees President Rick Wheeler presented awards and diplomas to the graduates, and the OSB Encore Singers performed.

Distinguished Alumni Award Winner Marilyn A. Klein, Class of 1973, addresses the graduates with a motivational speech that will be remembered by all.

TO OUR YOUNGEST GRADUATES AND THEIR FAMILIES:

With pride and pleasure, the entire staff of Overbrook School for the Blind celebrates your success as you leave Early Intervention for other adventures in learning.



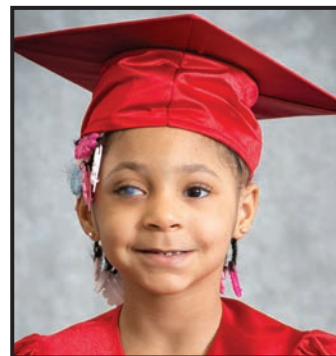
ABED A.



JULIAN B.



SERENITY C.



MILAYAH D.



JACOB H.



TYLER H.



ISIS J.



AHZIYAH K.



TYLER P.



LIAM P.



CHRISTIAN S.



KYLEIGH S.



AIDEN S.



HUY V.



RANDY R.R.



EMMA R.



CHARLES F.



MA'KIRA G.



LINGSEN K.



DINUSHKA P.



NOAH T.



Top Right: Early Childhood Program Coordinator Marguerite Bradley greets graduate Ahzyah K. Above: The Early Childhood Program Choir sang a song during the graduation ceremony.

WELCOME! Todd Reeves



The Overbrook School for the Blind Board of Trustees is pleased to announce that Todd Reeves has been named executive director/CEO.

Reeves comes to OSB from the Western Pennsylvania School for Blind Children where he has served as executive director and superintendent since 2007. Reeves served as Superintendent of the Washington School for the Deaf in Vancouver from 2003 – 2007. Originally from Eugene, Oregon, Reeves received his undergraduate degree from Pacific University with a major in communication disorders. He received a master's degree in 1988 in deaf education and clinical audiology at Lamar University in Texas and began his career as a speech language pathologist and teacher at the Washington School for the Deaf, where he served for five years. Reeves then attended the University of Washington in Seattle, receiving a J.D. from the School of Law and an educational administration certificate from their College of Education in 1996.

Following completion of his law degree, Reeves held positions as the Principal at Oregon School for the Deaf and Program Administrator in the Peninsula School District, supporting all secondary level special education services there, before accepting the position as Assistant Director of Special Education in the Tacoma School District. Over the next five years, as Assistant Director and then Director of Special Education of the Tacoma Public Schools, he provided oversight of a special education department serving 4,400 students with disabilities in this public school district of 34,000 students.

"I want to express my gratitude to the Board of Trustees for placing their faith in me and giving me this great opportunity, which I wholeheartedly embrace," said Reeves. "I look forward to upholding the legacy of a school such as Overbrook, which in its early history was the sole pathway taken by children who were blind or visually impaired in the Commonwealth. I am understandably impressed with the great things that occur at OSB now, every day. It is with deep respect for the past and high regard for the present that I'm eager to work alongside the staff to create new inroads for those we serve."

Todd Reeves begins his tenure at OSB on July 3rd.



OSB HISTORY DAY



Students and staff celebrated 185 years with our founder, "Julius Friedlander" (aka, Executive Director Jerry Kitzhoffer) on OSB History Day.

Dressed in a period costume from the era, "Julius" visited each OSB program to discuss and celebrate Overbrook's long and distinguished history.

In the Early Childhood program, students presented a 185th anniversary collaborative art project which included the handprint from each child in the program. After answering Julius' questions about the early founding of OSB, students and staff sang 'Happy Birthday' to OSB, blew out the candles, and had birthday cake with Julius.

Julius then visited with students from the Elementary Program in Biddle Garden where they presented their 185th art project entitled, "185 Smiles for Overbrook," an art collage which included 185 photos of OSB students.



Middle School students met Julius in the OSB Museum to see the contents of their collaborative time capsule which included items from our era (such as photos and flash drives) and letters from current students to future OSB students. The time capsule will be opened during OSB's 200th anniversary celebration.

Later, Julius sat down to discuss OSB's history with School to Work students in White Hall and then addressed High School students in the auditorium where everyone viewed the movie trailer created by our high school students entitled, "Then and Now at OSB."

OSB History Day was a fitting tribute to 185 years of making a difference for students who are visually impaired.

PROM 2017



The OSB Fieldhouse was completely transformed to *Moroccan Magic* for this year's Prom, thanks to the OSB Prom Committee, Chaired by Transition Teacher Justine Binck. Elijah M. and Shaniyah S. were voted Prom King and Queen of this enchanting evening.

BREAKING GROUND



During the groundbreaking ceremony, OSB students, staff and board members donned white construction hardhats for the customary first shovel dig in the ground on site of the future M. Christine Murphy Horticulture Center.

OSB Executive Director and CEO Jerry Kitzhoffer welcomed **Mayor Jim Kenney** at the top of the Rotunda steps for the groundbreaking ceremony for the **M. Christine Murphy Horticulture and Education Center** on Friday, April 21.

Students, staff, and members of the board of trustees all took part in the customary shovel ceremony.

The planned 1,780 square-foot adaptive and accessible greenhouse will be built on the north side of campus between the Rotunda Building and Lions Hall, and will house OSB's award-winning Farm to Table program and horticulture therapy activities.



PA State Representative Morgan Cephas, OSB Board of Trustee President Warwick S. Wheeler, Steve Rewinski from Green Mountain Energy Sun Club, OSB Executive Director Jerry Kitzhoffer, Anna Rosenblatt, Mayor Jim Kenney, and OSB Board of Trustees Member Sid Rosenblatt.

Thanks to a generous grant from the Green Mountain Energy Sun Club, the M. Christine Murphy Horticulture Education Center will be a LEED-certified, NetZero Building. With construction anticipated to be complete by the spring of 2018, the Horticulture Center will also create an on-campus hub where students in OSB's School to Work Program can gain real-life workforce skills that can result in future employment.

For more information about the M. Christine Murphy Horticulture and Education Center, please visit www.obs.org.

THANK YOU!

Special thanks to volunteers from KPMG, The Fruit Tree Planting Foundation and The Philadelphia Orchard Project, who volunteered their time on a very hot day to plant 30 fruit trees with our students in the OSB Orchard. KPMG also donated braille and audio books to OSB students as part of its KPMG Family for Literacy Program.



OSB Education and Professional Development Director Jackie Brennan (in black shirt) gathered students and KPMG staff together to plant a cherry tree in the front orchard.



Everyone helps out at OSB, even the OSB Huskie.

HAPPENINGS AT OSB



THE FRIEDLANDER MEDAL, the only award bestowed by the Overbrook School for the Blind Board of Trustees, was presented in May to two long-time board members, Robert D'Anjolell (left) and F. Howard Braithwaite.

Mr. D'Anjolell has served continuously on the

board for 25 years as board president, vice-president, and chair of the Development Committee. Mr. Braithwaite has served on the board continuously for 30 years as treasurer, chair of the Finance Committee, and the Budget and Audit Committee. He also served on the Development Committee.

Thank you for your dedication and years of service to OSB.



CONGRATULATIONS TO OUR RETIRING STAFF MEMBERS!

We are extremely grateful for the assistance, guidance, and leadership you have provided throughout the years. Best of luck!

Photo, left to right: Jacqueline Brown, Intervener, 5 years
Patricia Jacobs, Elementary ParaEducator, 23 years
Gerald Kitzhoffer, Executive Director and CEO, 9 years
Bill Hitchcock, Maintenance, 32 years
Anna Maria Giuffrida, Housekeeping, 10 years

OSB's Extended School Year Program (ESY) will run from July 10th to August 10th, from Monday through Thursday, 8:30 am-2 pm. This program is designed to maintain skills and reduce regression during the summer months by incorporating academic, social, behavioral and vocational Individualized Education Program (IEP) goals. Each summer, program themes such as "All About Me" provide an engaging foundation for summer learning and fun. For more information, contact Michele McCallion, Elementary ESY Coordinator at michele@obs.org or Victoria Romano, Secondary Program ESY Coordinator at vromano@obs.org.



OSB's Transition Vocational Initiative (TVI) is a three-week residential summer program (July 9-28) to prepare students who are blind or visually impaired for employment. TVI is presented in partnership with the Pennsylvania Bureau of Blindness and Visual Services (BBVS) within the Department of Labor and Industry's Office of Vocational Rehabilitation. For more information, contact Stephanie Hays at shays@obs.org.



OSB FUN DAY, a celebration of the end of the school year, enabled students to enjoy an entire day of games, activities, and new experiences such as a horse-drawn carriage ride in the rain and guided bike rides.

OSB student Logan J. enjoys a ride with a guide from the Pennsylvania Center for Adapted Sports.

Insight ...information about eye conditions and diseases that can affect a child's vision

Cortical Visual Impairment (CVI) is visual impairment that is caused by damage or atypical structures in the visual pathways and/or visual processing centers of the brain. Although the eye is normal, the brain cannot properly process the information it receives. People with CVI have difficulty using what their eye sees. They may have trouble recognizing faces, interpreting drawings, perceiving depth, or distinguishing between background and foreground.

The major causes of CVI are asphyxia, hypoxia (a lack of sufficient oxygen in the body's blood cells), or ischemia (not enough blood supply to the brain), all of which may occur during the birth process.

For more information about Cortical Visual Impairment, visit www.afb.org/cvi

2017 – 2018 SCHOOL CALENDAR

AUG	29	Tue	All Instructional Staff Return In-Service Day – 8:30 a.m.	FEB	16	Fri	12:00 p.m. Dismissal for Students; Professional Development Day in Afternoon for Staff
	30	Wed	Professional Development Day		19	Mon	PRESIDENT’S DAY No school for students & Instructional Staff
	31	Thu	Professional Development Day		20	Tue	All students return. Classes resume at 8:15 a.m.
SEPT	1	Fri	No School for Instructional Staff	MAR	23	Fri	SPRING VACATION begins at end of school day End of Third Quarter Grading Period
	4	Mon	LABOR DAY – SCHOOL CLOSED	APR	3	Tue	All students return. Classes resume at 8:15 a.m.
	5	Tue	First day of school for all OSB students		16	Mon	Professional Development Day No School for Students
OCT	5	Thu	Overbrook Experience 6 - 9 p.m.		17	Tue	All students return. Classes resume at 8:15 a.m. PERC Meeting at OSB – 7:00 p.m. Nevil Center Conference Room
	9	Mon	COLUMBUS DAY – No School for Students & Instructional Staff	MAY	4	Fri	Prom – 7:00 – 11:00 p.m.
	10	Tue	All students return. Classes resume at 8:15 a.m.		9	Wed	PERC Meeting at OSB – 7:00 p.m. Nevil Center Conference Room
	13	Fri	Parents’ Day – PERC Meeting		17	Thu	Spring Concert – 7:00 p.m. Public invited.
	19	Thu	PERC Meeting at OSB – 7:00 p.m. Nevil Center Conference Room		25	Fri	Achievement Day – 9:00 a.m. – Auditorium
					28	Mon	MEMORIAL DAY – SCHOOL CLOSED
NOV	3	Fri	Professional Development Day No School for Students End of First Quarter Grading Period		29	Tue	All students return. Classes resume at 8:15 a.m.
	6	Mon	All students return. Classes resume at 9:00 a.m.	JUN	1	Fri	Elementary Program Moving Up Ceremony
	22	Wed	12:00 p.m. Dismissal for Students; 1:00 P.M. Dismissal for Instructional Staff		4	Mon	Fun Day for all educational programs
	23	Thu	THANKSGIVING HOLIDAY SCHOOL CLOSED		7	Thu	Early Childhood Summer Celebration 10:00 a.m. Auditorium
	24	Fri	SCHOOL CLOSED		13	Wed	Commencement – 9:30 a.m. Auditorium
	27	Mon	All students return. Classes resume at 9:00 a.m.		15	Fri	12:00 p.m. Dismissal for Students; 3:15 p.m. Dismissal for Instructional Staff; Last day for students & Instructional Staff
DEC	4	Mon	PERC Meeting at OSB – 7:00 p.m. Nevil Center Conference Room		*18 – 20	M-W	Snow Make-Up Day #4, #5, #6
	7	Thu	Holiday Concert – 7:00 p.m. Auditorium Public Invited		22 – 24		Alumni Weekend
	14	Thu	Early Childhood Winter Program 10:00 a.m. Auditorium – Public Invited	JUL	4	Tue	Independence Day Observed SCHOOL CLOSED
	22	Fri	WINTER VACATION begins at the end of school day		JUL 9 – AUG 9		Early Childhood Summer Program Program runs Mondays – Thursdays, 9:00 – 2:00
					JULY 9 – AUG 9		ESY Program Program runs Mondays – Thursdays, 9:00 – 2:00
							<i>* Additional Snow Make-Up days if needed</i>
2018							
JAN	3	Wed	All students return. Classes resume at 8:15 a.m.				
	12	Fri	12:00 p.m. Dismissal for Students; Professional Development Day in Afternoon for Staff				
	15	Mon	MARTIN LUTHER KING DAY SCHOOL CLOSED				
	16	Tue	All students return. Classes resume at 8:15 a.m.				
	19	Fri	End of First Semester Grading Period				



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WE KNEW HE WAS OLD, BUT...!

"Julius Friedlander", aka Jerry
Kitzhoffer, speaks with an OSB
Teacher from 185 years ago!

SAVE THE DATE

10
05
17



The Fourth Annual Overbrook Experience

A Benefit for Overbrook School for the Blind