



TOWERSNEWS



HOME GROWN

Overbrook School for the Blind has taken great strides in recent years to enhance the quality of our campus in the city by creating a healthy (and beautiful!) learning environment.

The most visible development has been the OSB Edible Orchard Project which is largely located on the west side of campus. For the past few years, we've partnered with The Philadelphia Orchard Project, an organization which plants and supports community orchards in the city, to plant over 25 trees and shrubs along our Walking Path, from the front gate to White Hall. Varieties of fig, chestnut, apple, pear, plum, and cherry trees now dot the landscape and are already bearing fruit. A small garden of berries—strawberries, blackberries and raspberries—has been placed along one side of the pathway. Further in near the paved walkway, a pollinator garden of lemon balm, purple coneflower, and aster has been planted to attract bees.

Planted by OSB and Philadelphia Orchard Project volunteers, the Edible Orchard services OSB's Farm to Table Food Program. "The fruit from our orchard, as well as the bounty grown in the garden boxes planted with vegetables near Lions

Hall, is consumed by students and staff in our lunchroom, and some is sent home with the students," says Roseann McLaughlin, OSB Health Services and Farm to Table Coordinator.

This summer, OSB School To Work student, Njema Lennox, was hired to maintain and cultivate OSB's vegetable and herb boxes. "The best part of working for the Farm to Table Program was taking care of the plants and picking the vegetables when they were ready," says Njema. "The produce was then sold at our Farmers' Market on Wednesdays during the summer."

In the future, OSB students who are interested in gardening will receive training, learn how to maintain the garden beds, and assist with the retail work of the Farmers' Market, thereby practicing employment skills.

Some of our students already have experience getting their hands dirty as they have learned about textured plants and fragrant flowers from OSB Board Member and Alumna Peggy Garrett, OSB Class of 1951. Since 1996, Peggy and her gardening group, called "The Hands On Gardeners of

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE



Dear Friends:

Welcome to what promises to be another fantastic school year at OSB!

We are excited about our 184th year, and know that it will be filled with even more opportunities for all of our students. As we begin this new year, we pledge to you, our students and parents, that this will be a wonderful year of engaging, meaningful, and

rigorous work in our classrooms, along with some fun and special times through our extracurricular clubs and activities.

Our staff of highly qualified professional educators and support personnel is committed to providing our students many opportunities—both inside and outside of the classroom—for quality learning and continual growth. We added some new faces to our faculty list, and we extend our warmest wishes to the new teachers and staff who will embrace opportunities and unlock the potential of each and every student here at OSB.

We invite and encourage you, our students and parents, to work in partnership with us. We extend a special, yearlong invitation to our parents to join us at school activities and events whenever you can. We want...we need...and we value your involvement and support in your child's education.

My many thanks to the entire OSB community for a great start to the school year!

"Mr. K"

Gerald Kitzhoffer

Executive Director and CEO

WELCOME NEW STAFF MEMBERS



Karen Hess
(Aquatic Center)



Muneer Tawam
(Transition)



Esmeralda Whitaker
(Aquatic Center)



Gonkarnue Wowah (Security), Diana Cucurullo (EIO), Casey McLaughlin (Food Services)



Audrey Perlman (Teacher Substitute), Damian Benitez (Security), Jamal Brown (Security), and Nyoka Bailey-Gayle (High School)

Not pictured: Irvin Ferebee (Food Services)



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FOLLOW US



HAPPENINGS AT OSB



1. OSB International Program

OSB was pleased to welcome three visitors from China who participated in a three-week study tour on our campus.

Yajuan Liu (Joan) from the Changsha Special Education School, Xuejuan Fang (Sherry) from the Shanghai School for the Blind, and Qian Li (Tammy) from the Changsha Special Education School, (pictured from left to right), took part in a teacher training initiative to learn how best to provide services and educational programs to students with visual challenges. Topics included school operations, programs and services, overviews on government policies and regulations, laws with regard to individuals with disabilities, and how technologies are used by students in the classroom.

2. Football with Fathers

The Early Intervention Programs kicked off the school year with "Football With Fathers," a fun-filled morning for students and dads, stepdads, grandpops, brothers, and guardians to connect with other families who have children with vision loss.

3. Parents' Day

Teachers, therapists, and staff were on hand to welcome parents and guardians into their child's classroom on Parents' Day. Presentations by Executive Director and CEO Gerald Kitzhoffer, and Education and Professional Development Director Jackie Brennan, were made to inform parents of the latest updates and changes at OSB.

4. Holiday Concert

The music for the holiday concert, WINTER STAR, brings together the celebration of Christmas and Hanukkah. The light from the Winter Star guides us all to make better our lives in the here and now. Song selections, "Stars I Shall Find" and "I See A Star," help capture that sentiment while "Shout Allelu" will get the audience on their feet. And of course, no OSB concert would be complete if we didn't have a fun piece like "Hot Chocolate" to round things out.

Join us on Thursday, December 10th at 7pm in the Main Auditorium. It's guaranteed to get you in the spirit of the holidays!

BITES FOR BYTES



Special guests Victor Tsaran and Karo Caran are joined by OSB Executive Director Gerald Kitzhoffer and his wife, Carmella.



Co-Chairs Emmy VanderZwaag and Carol Wyeth welcome Ken Martin to the Bites for Bytes reception.



Guests enjoy dinner in the dark.

Despite the rainy night on October 1st, over 200 guests took part in the second installment of The Overbrook Experience, a "Dining in the Dark" style event designed to raise funds for OSB's Technology Program.

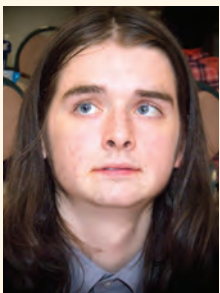
The theme for this year's event was *Bites for Bytes* and focused on adaptive and accessible technology that is available to improve the lives of students who are blind and visually impaired and those who have additional challenges as well.

Bites for Bytes featured a dynamic presentation from Victor Tsaran and Karolina Caran, two former students of

OSB's International Program, who today work for the technology giant, Google, to make the corporation's programs and products more accessible.

After cocktails in OSB's West Cloister, guests enjoyed a tented dinner outdoors on campus. The evening also included a Silent Auction, Wine Wall, and Interactive Technology Stations.

Many thanks to co-chairs Emmy VanderZwaag, from the OSB Board of Trustees, and Carol Wyeth, from the OSB Development Committee. *Bites for Bytes* raised over \$120,000 for OSB's Technology Program.



DEAR OSB,

I'd like to give a warm welcome back to another fun, educational school year. I hope you're looking forward to a good year with successful grades and spectacular community events. As Student Council President, I want to make this year the best for the students at Overbrook. I will be sure to involve all of you in fun activities that will educate and entertain you. I am also looking forward to this school year because there are many special activities that will keep you healthy.

We are currently in our swimming season which started a few weeks ago. We will have our Wrestling and Cheerleading sports in November. Then, we have Goalball starting in February and Track starting in May. These activities take place throughout the week. We have sports meets at home, or off campus in Maryland or at other schools. Good luck to all of the Overbrook Sports Teams.

As I said before, we would like to get involved in our community with issues such as Breast Cancer and The Fight to End Hunger. As Student Council President, I would like to give all of you an opportunity to join and stand up for these worthy causes.

Once again, I hope all of you are looking forward to having a wonderful school year. I appreciate all of your support. Work hard and play well. Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,
Tyler S. Jordan, President

PS: Don't let the winning stop, and don't let the grades drop.

HOME GROWN *continued from cover*



Associated Services for the Blind and Visually Impaired,” have adopted and cared for the garden outside of the Nevil Center. “It’s so good for the students to touch, smell, and enjoy the plants, so good for their spirit,” says Ms. Garrett. “The landscape has always been important at OSB. When I was a student here, I used to say that I go to school in a park.”

Our “green” tradition continues at OSB. A fully accessible and adaptive greenhouse, located on the north side of campus between Lions Hall and the Main Building, is planned for the Spring of 2017. Offering a rich sensory experience, the OSB Greenhouse will teach students how to identify the shapes,

smells, and textures of various plants, and how to care for them. There will be room for planting, making crafts, and practicing science studies, and students will one day sell herbs, flowers, and vegetables, for experience with retail work.

In essence, OSB has updated the use and flow of many areas on campus which has transformed learning spaces, enhanced the campus walkability, and created open spaces that unify important buildings and landscapes. While our OSB colors may be red and white, our campus in the city is definitely green.

MUSIC NOTES

Our very own music teachers, Jim Palmer and Christopher Sapienza, have been selected to sing in the 60-person choir that will accompany world-renowned tenor ANDREA BOCELLI in concert in December.

Presented by the Philly Pops, Andrea Bocelli will perform a one night-only concert at the Wells Fargo Center on Saturday, December 12th as part of his 2015 North American tour.

Diagnosed with congenital glaucoma at birth, Bocelli lost his vision completely at the age of 12 after he was hit on the head during a game of football. Today, Bocelli is known for being one of the greatest singing talents in the world. And this world-renowned talent will be backed up by none other than Mr. Palmer and Mr. Sap!



OSB Music Teachers Jim Palmer and Christopher Sapienza have their tickets to perform in Andrea Bocelli's backup vocal ensemble in December.

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

My dreams motivate me.
My dreams encourage me.
My dreams inspire me.
My dreams bring me happiness.
Everyone should have a dream.

OSB Student Ricky Charlton
Mrs. Dasch's Class

SCHOOL CALENDAR

We've made some changes to the 2015-2016 School Calendar. Please note: School IS in session on Monday, April 4, 2016.

NOV	6	Fri	Professional Development Day No School for Students	MAR	23	Wed	SPRING VACATION BEGINS SCHOOL CLOSED
	25	Wed	12 Noon Dismissal for Students; 1 p.m. Dismissal for Instructional Staff		29	Tues	All Students Return. Classes resume at 8:15 a.m.
	26	Thurs	THANKSGIVING HOLIDAY SCHOOL CLOSED	APR	1	Fri	12 Noon Dismissal for Students; Professional Development Day afternoon for staff
	27	Fri	SCHOOL CLOSED		4	Mon	SCHOOL IN SESSION
DEC	10	Thurs	Holiday Concert – 7 p.m. Auditorium. Public Invited	MAY	6	Fri	Prom at 7 p.m.
	17	Thurs	Early Childhood Winter Program – 10 a.m. Public Invited		19	Thurs	Spring Concert at 7 p.m. Auditorium. Public invited.
	23	Wed	SCHOOL CLOSED WINTER VACATION BEGINS		27	Fri	Achievement Day at 9 a.m. Auditorium.
2016					30	Mon	MEMORIAL DAY SCHOOL CLOSED
JAN	4	Mon	All students return. Classes resume at 9 a.m.	JUN	6	Mon	Fun Day for all educational programs
	15	Fri	12 Noon Dismissal for students; Professional Development Day in Afternoon for Staff		10	Fri	Commencement at 9:30 a.m. Auditorium.
	18	Mon	MARTIN LUTHER KING DAY SCHOOL CLOSED		17	Fri	Last Day of School 12 Noon Dismissal for Students
FEB	5	Fri	Spirit Week Assembly at 10 a.m. Field House.		24–26	Wknd	Alumni Weekend
	15	Mon	Presidents' Day. No School for Students and Instructional Staff				