



## THINKING AND ACTING BOTH LOCALLY AND GLOBALLY

### The OSB International Program

Executive Director and CEO Todd Reeves and International Program Coordinator Wenru Niu recently met with OSB's partners in Cambodia, Indonesia, Mongolia, and the Philippines, to improve our programs that bring change to under-served children with visual impairment.

Since 1985, OSB's International Program has provided training, technical assistance and material support to increase educational access and expand employment opportunities worldwide for people with visual impairment.



(1) Mr. Reeves (second from left) visits The School for the Visually and Hearing Impaired in Siem Reap with Mr. Auray Aun, Director of Krousar Thmey (left), Mr. Chanveasna Aep, Academic and Career Counseling (ACC) Program Coordinator (in the middle) and Director and Assistant Directors of the School for the Visually and Hearing Impaired in Siem Reap.

(2) A visit to the Resource Center at Battambang University. Mr. Sovannara Eang, Krousar Thmey ICT project manager (front left), Mr. Reeves, Mr. Auray Aun, Director of Krousar Thmey (second on the right), Mr. Chanveasna Aep, Academic and Career Counseling (ACC) Program Coordinator (on right), college student in front of a computer.

(3) Mr. Reeves met with students and staff to discuss mathematics instruction for blind students in Indonesia.

## EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE



Mr. Reeves shows Cambodian money to  
High School student Jessica B.

Dear Friends:

Promoting accessibility and providing a barrier free environment in a campus that is over 150 years old that includes a Spanish Renaissance-style building with two interior cloisters is easier said than done.

Over the years, we've renovated buildings, added ramps and elevators, and modernized classrooms and dormitories to provide our students with opportunities for activity and independence. In the future, we will work with an architectural firm to guide us through a re-design of our buildings to provide appropriate accessibility throughout the campus.

But first, we wanted to engage a school safety and security firm to identify any capital considerations that we could pass along to our architects to integrate with their accessibility design work. During March, we scheduled a Safety and Security Audit in collaboration with National School Safety and Security Services (NSSSS), a firm based in Cleveland. Though we don't consider the school to be an unsafe environment, inviting some fresh sets of eyes to examine our procedures, survey our grounds and talk with several members of our community was a proactive way to ensure we're doing all we can to enhance student and staff safety.

How we approach safety and security in our schools is ever changing. We look forward to receiving a complete report with recommendations to update the safety, use and flow of most areas while preserving the building's beloved architectural details.

The path ahead will no doubt be challenging, but necessary to match the trust parents place in our School, each day. Each day parents entrust us with the education and care of their children, our commitment to provide an educational environment that maximizes achievement, accessibility and safety is redoubled.

Sincerely,

Todd Reeves  
*Executive Director and CEO*

## WELCOME NEW STAFF

We have a lot of new faces at OSB this year. Take a minute to visit our website for the complete list of new staff members at <http://bit.ly/2GuMvGT>.



**TOWERS NEWSLETTER**  
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Established 1832

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FOLLOW US





# Spirit Week!

The OSB community showed its husky pride during Spirit Week in February.

This annual OSB tradition encourages students to wear a fun and funky array of clothes with a different theme for each day of the week.



On Monday, it was **Philadelphia Sports Team Day** which was easy to do since the Philadelphia Eagles had just won the Superbowl!



We rolled right out of bed on Tuesday for **Pajama Day**.



Later in the week we celebrated **Crazy Hat Day**.



Our students weren't the only ones dressed up for Spirit Week. Here's the lunchroom staff decked out in their finest for **Crazy Hat Day**.



On Friday we donned OSB gear for **Red and White Day** which included a Pep Rally full of cheers, contests and games.

Thanks to students and staff for making Spirit Week a true celebration of our school community.



## THE OSB INTERNATIONAL PROGRAM

### Cambodia:

During their trip to Cambodia, Mr. Reeves and Ms. Niu continued the work of ON-NET, the Overbrook-Nippon Network on Educational Technology, to make access technology more widely available to people who are blind in Southeast Asia. Mr. Reeves and Ms. Niu were the guests at Krousar Thmey, the first foundation in Cambodia to help disadvantaged children by establishing schools for the blind and hearing impaired. The focus of this visit was to monitor project work on developing ICT (Information and Communication Technology), providing audiobooks to students, and training teachers in preparation for the upcoming takeover of schools for the blind and hearing impaired by the government in 2020. They visited schools in Siem Reap and Battambang, as well as met with the President of the University of Battambang.



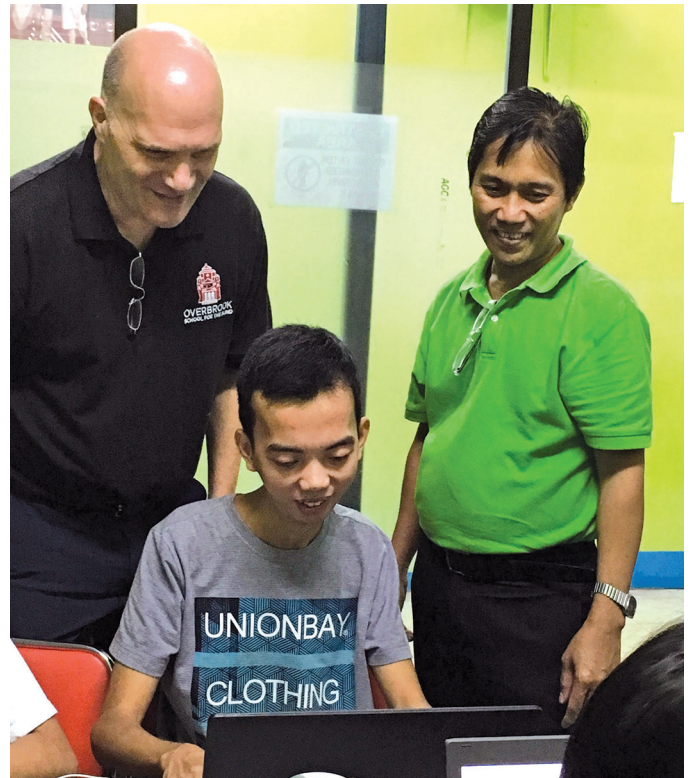
Mr. Reeves with Karolis Verbliugevicius, at school in Ulaanbaatar, the capital of Mongolia.

### Mongolia:

ON-NET co-sponsored a workshop with ICEVI (International Council for Education of People with Visual Impairment) while meeting with the Mongolia National Federation of the Blind (MNFB). The workshop was entitled, "How to Achieve What You Want & Build Your Desired Lifestyle," and featured a presentation from the workshop trainer, Karolis Verbliugevicius, a Lithuanian entrepreneur who is blind who shared his personal life experiences with students, factory workers, and MNFB members and staff.

### Indonesia:

In Indonesia, Mr. Reeves and Ms. Niu met with representatives from the Mitra Netra Foundation, ON-NET, ICEVI, RBI and local school and university representatives, to discuss math instruction for blind students in Indonesia. The Mitra Netra Foundation also provided digital talking books to 44 special libraries in the country.



At the Carl Balita Review Center in Manila, Mr. Reeves worked with Mr. Marlo Lucas (right), Coordinator of ON-NET's Employment Project and ICEVI's Higher Education Project, and Mr. Abdulaziz Dapilin, Researcher.

### Myanmar:

Ms. Niu met with staff from the Myanmar National Association of the Blind to complete the Speech Application Programming Interface (SAPI) compliant Burmese Text-to-Speech (TTS) engine and discussed project options that can be supported by ON-NET. The final work will be done between the Sao Mai Vocational and Assistive Technology Center for the Blind in Vietnam.

### Vietnam:

At the Sao Mai Vocational and Assistive Technology Center for the Blind in Vietnam, where the work has been focused on finding employment for adults with visual impairment, the team conducted meetings between potential employers and job seekers.

### Philippines:

In the Philippines, Mr. Reeves had a chance to see firsthand the impact of the ON-NET Project. He met a few of the program's beneficiaries; observed STEM training for teachers and Computer-Eyes Camp; visited Davao School for the Blind, and met and toured the Resources for the Blind, Inc.

*As a leader in the education of children with visual impairment and multiple disabilities, OSB is doing its part to foster and share high-quality blindness education around the world.*





In Davao, Mr. Reeves (center, in black shirt), was joined by students and staff from the Davao School for the Blind. Marlo Lucas, Coordinator of ON-NET's Employment Project and ICEVI's Higher Education Project, is on the end at the right.



Mr. Reeves 'high-fives' one of the youngest students in a classroom in Mongolia.

**Back at home**, the OSB International Program also welcomed visitors from ICEVI, the International Council for Education of People with Visual Impairment. Joined by representatives from the Texas School for the Blind and Visually Impaired (TSBVI), and Perkins School for the Blind, the group met to determine the next steps for the ICEVI Nippon Foundation Mathematics Project and to conduct ICEVI's Publications Committee meeting.

The goal of the Mathematics Project is to contribute to the worldwide improvement of mathematics education by developing a set of accessible multi-media instructional materials designed to assist teachers of children with visual impairments. Mathematics instruction is often neglected or non-existent for children who are blind in developing countries throughout the world. This situation is not because children with visual impairment cannot learn mathematics; rather, mathematics instructors often present abstract concepts in visual form, preventing students with visual impairment from learning.



(left to right): Todd Reeves; Cyral Millers, Texas School for the Blind and Visually Impaired Outreach Director; Larry Campbell, President Emeritus of ICEVI and retired OSB International Program Administrator; Frances Gentle, President of ICEVI; Marianne Riggio, Director of Educational Leadership Program & International Campus Related Training at Perkins School for the Blind; Kay Ferrell, ICEVI North America/Caribbean Regional Chair-person; Wenru Niu; and M.N.G. Mani, CEO of ICEVI.



**What is YOUR Defining Moment? When did you discover that YOU are ENOUGH?** Join the OSB Music Department on Thursday, May 17th, for a musical journey that uncovers our students' unique strengths and individual beauty — our own Defining Moments.



# OUTBOUND WITH OSB



Thanks to a partnership with Art-Reach and support from Comcast, OSB students used typography and paint on a giant plaster bust of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. that was displayed on the steps of the Philadelphia Museum of Art during Black History Month (and seen by millions during the Eagles Superbowl Parade).



While in Harrisburg to take in Executive Director and CEO Todd Reeves' testimony before the Senate Appropriations Committee, OSB students, staff and alumni enjoyed a chance encounter with Governor Tom Wolf. From left, Tyeisha G. (red sweater), OSB School to Work Coordinator, Susan Vaughan (rear), OSB student Tyler J., OSB Alumni Class of 1977 Lyle Sine, Governor Tom Wolf, OSB Alumni Class of 1967 Bill Newmann and Betty Passanante-Rodriguez, Vice President, OSB Board of Trustees. After enjoying a tour provided by State Representative Morgan Cephas, the OSB staff, students and alums met Governor Wolf, where the Commonwealth's 47th Governor took time to welcome our group and shake hands.



Transition Coordinator Bob Ashbridge and School to Work Coordinator Susan Vaughan presented at the Pennsylvania Department of Education's Annual Conference on transition and the National Agenda's Expanded Core Curriculum. OSB Teacher of the Visually impaired Rose Yanders discussed low and no cost technology for students with visual impairment.



OSB athletes took part in the EAAB Winter Tournament in New York. The OSB cheerleaders placed 1st in the cheerleading competition and won the Spirit Award for outstanding sportsmanship. The OSB wrestlers placed 4th in the Wrestling competition. Special mentions to Tyler J. and Gilbert P. for winning their individual wrestling matches. Way to go, Huskies!



Occupational Therapist Melissa Brown (left) and Speech Language Pathologist Laura Stephan were selected to present at The Assistive Technology Industry Association's (ATIA) Annual Conference. Melissa and Laura presented two different topics about how OSB is implementing assistive technology in the classroom. Topics covered were "Pairing Eye Gaze and Vibroacoustics for Students with Complex Needs" and "Tactile Talking 2: A Case Study."

Photo by Conrad Erb — SeePhillyLearn.com

OSB was the proud recipient of the 2018 Member Agency Award presented during the Cultural Access Awards Ceremony hosted by Art-Reach. Thanks to a collaboration with the Pennsylvania Ballet's Second Company and Art-Reach, six OSB students performed the world premiere of an original tap dance piece during the awards ceremony. It took ten dance rehearsals to get the steps just right, but we brought the house down during the performance!





## ARTISTIC OFFERINGS

Artwork by three OSB students will be on display at the Pennsylvania Art Education Association's Youth Art Exhibit in the Pennsylvania Department of Education's building in Harrisburg through April 20th.

1. After listening to a story about poppy fields in honor of Remembrance Day (Veterans Day), Sydney A. from the Elementary program painted a field of poppies using 3D finger paint and a sponge brush.
2. After learning about Vincent van Gogh, Early Childhood student Noelle S. created a sunflower using 3D bubble paint.
3. After a STEAM — Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Math — classroom lesson, Hezekiah R. from the Middle School sprinkled snow on colored tissue paper which bled and left a colorful abstract image.

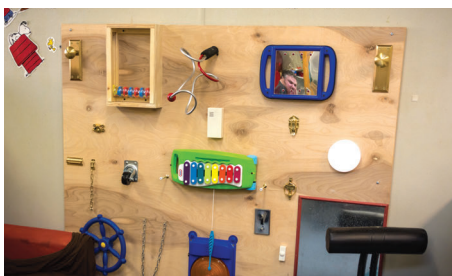


## Insight ...information about eye conditions and diseases that can affect a child's vision

Albinism is a hereditary condition characterized by a variable lack of pigment in the eyes, skin or hair. People with albinism may have pale pink skin and blond to white hair, but there are different types of albinism, and the amount of pigment varies. The irises of their eyes may be white or pinkish. They are sensitive to bright light and glare and commonly have other vision problems. While some people with albinism can see well enough to drive, many have impaired vision and may even be legally blind. Albinism is often accompanied by nystagmus or strabismus. Since they are sensitive to bright light, people with albinism often wear tinted eyeglasses.

For more information about Albinism, visit [www.albinism.org](http://www.albinism.org)

## CREATIVE COLLABORATION



Occupational Therapists Kelli Page and Abby Underkoffler collaborated with Overbrook's Carpenter Extraordinaire, Vinny D'Angelico, to make functional and fun Busy Walls in the classroom. The Busy Wall encourages students to use their hands to explore and operate functional items in a safe, motivating way. It's a great way to keep fidgety hands occupied as well as working on bilateral hand use, fine motor skills, cause and effect, and problem-solving skills.

Early Childhood student, Noelle S., loves to draw. When she heard that Ms. Worsley's high school class produces the student newspaper, Noelle asked if her class would partner with her to write and illustrate a children's story based on her favorite animal, a fox. The high school students agreed, and with guidance, they researched fables, fairy tales, and children's books, to develop a story for Noelle to illustrate. The result is "Fiona The Fox" and the first reading of it was presented in Noelle's classroom with her Early Childhood and High School friends. Everyone loved the story, and the High School students were impressed with how Noelle's artwork brought the story to life.

## LATEST RELEASES

Check out *Good Morning, Overbrook*, a news broadcast created by OSB High School students to keep our community up to date on events, activities and very cool things that happen at our school. Use this link to watch the latest broadcast on OSB's Ustream channel. <http://www.ustream.tv/channel/92VYKkeCjq8>

Keep up with the latest issue of *The Red and White* newspaper produced by OSB high school students. There are a variety of formats available on our website blog. Visit [www.obs.org/blog](http://www.obs.org/blog).

"Overbrook School for the Blind, 185 Years," the 2016-2017 OSB Annual Report, is available on our website at [www.obs.org](http://www.obs.org). If you would like to request a copy, please contact Maryann Flack in the Development Office at (215) 877-0313, ext. 256.





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# DESIGNER BAG BINGO

Join Overbrook School for the Blind and Parents and Educators Responding to Children (P.E.R.C.) for Designer Bag Bingo on Saturday, April 21 in OSB's Nevil Field House!

Guests will enjoy ten rounds of Bingo for a chance to win a designer handbag from Kate Spade, Michael Kors, Tory Burch, Coach and more. There will also be a 50/50, bonus Bingo rounds and chances to win additional prizes throughout the evening!



Register today for your chance to win one of these beautiful designer bags!

**DATE:** Saturday April 21, 2018

**LOCATION:** Overbrook School for the Blind Nevil Field House  
6333 Malvern Avenue, Philadelphia, PA 19151

**TIME:** Doors Open at 6:00 PM, Event Begins at 7:00 PM

**TICKETS:** \$30 in Advance/ \$35 at the Door  
Reserve a Table of Eight – \$230

For additional information and to register,  
visit [www.obs.org/specialevents](http://www.obs.org/specialevents).

*Proceeds benefit OSB and P.E.R.C.*

*This is a BYO event: Guests are encouraged to bring their own beverages and snacks. Daubers and extra cards will be available for purchase.*