

March April

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2020-2021 Annual Report

A RESILIENT RESPONSE TO COVID-19



THE MISSION OF OVERBROOK SCHOOL FOR THE BLIND is to develop and deliver education that enhances the options available for persons with visual impairments, including those with additional challenges, so that they have the greatest opportunity to experience active and fulfilling lives.

THE VISION OF OVERBROOK SCHOOL FOR THE BLIND is to inspire individuals with visual impairment, including those with additional challenges, to achieve their highest potential; to share our culture that embraces their abilities; to be a dynamic and leading educational organization; and to use our expertise to positively influence our students, families, partners and peers, regionally, nationally and internationally.

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Dear Friends:

On behalf of the Overbrook School for the Blind Board of Trustees and staff, we are pleased to share the 2020-2021 Annual Report with you, "Responding to Covid-19".

There is no question that 2020 was one of the most challenging years for Overbrook School for the Blind and our community. Together, we weathered innumerable challenges, and there were many days when it was difficult not to focus on the hardship and loss that Covid-19 brought to our doorstep.

But with the strength and support of our staff and with the expertise of our Board of Trustees, whose insight and guidance helped us carry out our mission, we quickly adjusted to the situation, switched to virtual methods of interaction, and continued to serve our students and families.

We learned that we can deliver progress even amid historic adversity. We adapted and became more resilient, adjusting operations and working methods. We became more responsive, assisting our students and families in times of immediate need. We maximized the use of technology. More importantly, we worked together in good faith and with shared goals, many of which are highlighted in this report and appear alongside the creative solutions and strategies implemented to restore what was lost due to the pandemic.

As we hope for an end to the Covid-19 pandemic in 2021-2022, we look back on a very active and impactful year at OSB, and thank you for your continued generosity and commitment to changing the lives of students with vision loss and other challenges.





Sincerely,

Todd Reeves

Todd Reeves Executive Director and CEO

Mayore & Stern

Marjorie G. Stein President of the Board of Trustees



Throughout our history, Overbrook School for the Blind has experienced many successes in enhancing the education of students with vision loss, but the arrival of Covid-19 tested our school like never before.

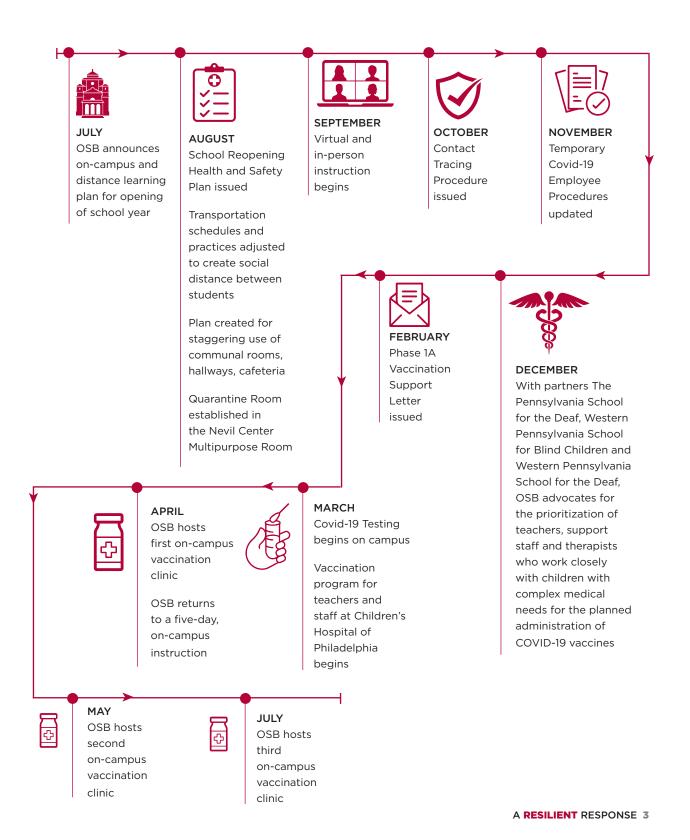
Our team pulled together admirably to continue delivering extraordinary instruction and care in the face of this unprecedented pandemic.

What we learned is that no matter how long this pandemic lasts, our work can only be done when we mobilize the collective power of our entire community, weaving a web of support between families, staff, partners, donors, and volunteers.

We are all in this together—stewards of our community and caretakers of one another.



2020-2021 PANDEMIC TIMELINE On OSB's Campus



2020-2021 **AT A GLANCE**











180 STUDENTS

79 Virtual Instruction101 On-Campus Instruction40 Bind140 Visually Impaired55 Cortical Visual Impairment (CVI)Implement <th></th> <th></th> <th>Å</th> <th></th> <th></th>			Å		
Hearing LossWheelchairWalkerAssisted WalkerImage: WheelchairImage: WheelchairImage: WalkerImage: WalkerImage: WheelchairImage: WheelchairImage: WheelchairImage: Wheelc	Virtual	On-Campus		Visually	Cortical Visual
Image: Non-StructureImage: Non-Structure				-	
Occupational TherapyPhysical TherapySpeech SpeechOrientation and MobilityAudiology AudiologyADDITIONAL SUPPORTBEHAVIOR SUPPORT 10 CounselingWORK EXPERIENCE 63 On Campus	33111	~	((۲ م	*	
8 Intervener 10 Counseling 63 On Campus	Occupational	Physical	-	Orientation	
(works one-on-one with students who are deafblind)17 Behavior Plan17 Off Campus22 1:1 Nurse17 Behavior Plan17 Off Campus	8 Intervener (works one-on-one with students who are deafblind)	9	10 Counseling	63	3 On Campus

INSTRUCTIONAL CURRICULUM

Using the Unique Learning Systems, OSB Students Follow One of Four Curricular Areas:

Academic Focus: 29 Students follow a typical academic curriculum or program

Functional Academic Focus: 46 Students focus on independent living, vocational and social skills, and emphasize communication

Experiential Focus: 67 Students with significant challenges learn to interact with their environment

Life Skills Focus: **38** Students learn the skills needed for full participation in everyday life

A student's specific curricular focus is individually determined by their multi-disciplinary IEP (Individualized Educational Plan) team.

LANGUAGE SPOKEN AT HOME

- 156 English
- 3 Arabic
- 1 Chinese
- 14 Spanish
- 1 Korean
- 1 Punjabi
- 1 Russian
- 2 Urdu
- 1 Vietnamese

STUDENT SCHOOL DISTRICTS

Berks County Conrad Weiser Area Muhlenberg

Bucks County Bristol Township Neshaminy Pennsbury

Chester County Avon Grove Great Valley Tredyffrin-Easttown West Chester Area

Delaware County Chester-Upland Chichester Garnet Valley Marple-Newtown Penn-Delco Radnor Township Rose Tree Media Southeast Delco Springfield Upper Darby Wallingford-Swarthmore William Penn

Montgomery County Abington Cheltenham Colonial Hatboro-Horsham Jenkintown Lower Merion Methacton Norristown Area North Penn Perkiomen Valley Pottstown Springfield Township Spring-Ford Area Upper Dublin Upper Merion Area Upper Moreland

Philadelphia School District

Philadelphia (Charter Schools) Agora Charter School Mastery Charter School-Hardy Williams Mastery Charter School-Pickett Campus Mastery Charter School-Smedley Elementary Universal Companies Universal Institute Charter School

York County Spring Grove

Camden County Camden City Gloucester County Deptford Township



OPERATIONAL RESPONSE

Layered prevention strategies were implemented to reduce the overall risk of Covid-19 transmission for students and school staff.

Vaccinations: In order to protect students and staff from getting seriously ill with COVID-19 and to reduce transmission, all teachers, staff and students who were eligible to get a COVID-19 vaccination were encouraged to do so.



Masks:

3 Vaccination clinics were held on campus**99%** of staff vaccinated

(to date)

14,000 masks ordered

1,600 pediatric masks ordered**200** clear masks for hearing impaired

- 500 N95 masks
 2,000 Face shields
 4,100 disposable gowns
 54,000 pairs of gloves
 648 bottles of hand sanitizer
 20 stand hand sanitizer dispensers
- **30** wall hand sanitizer dispensers



Who says you can't look great while protecting yourself and others? Face masks have become a part of our wardrobes, and some folks have had fun with them. In addition to creating OSB-branded masks, which are available for purchase on

our website, students and staff have shown their creativity by turning face masks into art projects and expressions of identity while staying safe.



Social Distancing: To the extent possible, distance was created between desks and tables in classrooms, shared spaces and restrooms, and on bus transportation.

4 Food Carts were ordered to transport food to classrooms to limit large groups assembling in the lunchroom

Ventilation: We held class outdoors. We opened the windows and doors. We repurposed large spaces to serve as temporary classrooms. We decreased occupancy in areas where increased ventilation was not feasible.



6 Picnic Tables ordered

Physical Barriers: Ways we changed the physical environment in classrooms to prevent the spread of Covid-19



- 10 New sinks installed in classrooms
- 18 Touchless faucets installed
- 100 Student desk shields
- 25 (6X6) Classroom barriers

Visual/Auditory Cues: Signs and recordings to remind students and staff about physical distancing, hand hygiene, respiratory hygiene, and directional signs in hallways

66 Printed Signs/Posters ordered





Staff in the Health Services Office

Covid-19 Task Force: Formed to create a consensus-driven set of guidelines for reopening school and keeping students safe. Identified a designated point of contact responsible for responding to Covid-19 concerns

Training: Key staff trained and able to conduct contact tracing protocols



Testing: Screening Testing provided a critical layer of prevention that identified infected people with Covid-19, including those with or without symptoms

46 Thermometers ordered (Thermal, Free Standing and Hand-held)
100 Batteries for Thermometers
1,600 Covid Test Kits ordered

High School Teacher Eva Worsley teaches virtually



PROGRAM EXPANSION

Despite the challenges of navigating a global pandemic and the alterations it demands, Overbrook School for the Blind's programs found a way to grow.

The CVI Clinic: Just before the Covid-19 shutdown, OSB introduced a Cortical Visual Impairment partner clinic to address the growing population of children diagnosed with CVI. While the pandemic slowed the number of students seen during the clinic days, a plan to develop a full time clinic for enrolled and unenrolled children with CVI was solidified by the Board of Trustees.

In addition to assessments, the CVI Clinic will develop partnerships with community medical providers, programs to foster growth in the parent alliance, coaching and training to bolster effective educational planning and a professional learning community, and opportunities to conduct research to contribute to the knowledge of CVI in the field.

CVI Specialist Beth Ramella created comprehensive reports to share with the families and educational teams who were seen in the clinic and met virtually to review the report and answer questions.

"Parental participation is so important to the educational team," says Ramella. "Parents who understand their child's CVI are able to strongly advocate for good vision services."



Mari works with CVI Specialist Beth Ramella



OSBnb: Over the course of the school year, multiple in-depth discussions were held with the Philadelphia Zoning Board of Adjustment and the Overbrook Farms community to discuss OSBnb, our endeavor to create a student-run, accessible bed and breakfast located on campus at 6398 Woodbine Avenue.

With planned features that go above and beyond ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act) requirements, OSBnb will address the need for travel accommodations for those living with complex disabilities.

"Once OSBnb is operational, we believe it will offer an entire care suite for disabled travelers visiting Philadelphia for medical care or for tourism," says Todd Reeves, Executive Director and CEO. "We're excited about the opportunities OSBnb will afford our School to Work students in the hospitality services industry, giving many of them a chance to demonstrate their abilities in the workplace."

The Philadelphia Zoning Board of Adjustment recently approved OSB's zoning variance so renovation to the property will begin soon.

Accessibility Plan: Thanks to the support and advocacy of State Senator Vincent Hughes (D-Philadelphia/Montgomery) and State Rep. Morgan Cephas (D-Philadelphia), Overbrook School for the Blind was the recipient of a \$750,000 Redevelopment Assistance Capital Program (RACP) grant to improve accessibility and safety at the school's main entrance and within the Rotunda building.

The grant will benefit our visually impaired and increasingly non-ambulatory student population with adaptations that will make the main school building publicly accessible and secure. All of the components—from an elevator large enough for multiple wheelchairs to the installation of ramps and additional accessible routes for rapid egress—will serve and protect our student population.

The first phase of this project began in late summer.

The M. Christine Murphy Horticulture and Education Center: One of the silver linings to the Covid-19 pandemic was the bounty of fresh fruits, vegetables and herbs that our Horticulture Program continued to produce -816 pounds of it!

With the assistance of OSB students from most of the educational programs and two student interns from the School to Work Program, multiple donations were organized to go to the Upper Darby and Chester County Food Banks.

"I fully expect next year's growing season to be even more successful," says Horticultural Therapist Rich Matteo. "Plans are already underway to share the crops with families, friends, and our neighbors in the Overbrook community."

School to Work student Ela helped harvest the tomato crop



OSB's Development and Communications Department:

It was easy to feel overwhelmed with information about Covid-19 during 2020-21, mostly because the data rapidly changed from one day to the next.

"With reduced opportunities to spend time together in person came new challenges to remain socially connected," says Pamela McGonigle, Director of Development and Communications. "To help the OSB community navigate the pandemic, information was continually updated on our social media channels and website, and several new publications were produced by our department."

Parent Update: Produced every Monday on our website, this digital newsletter provides guidance and resources to parents and guardians about the latest changes in policies and procedures within OSB.

Health & Safety Update: A steady flow of information from the CDC and the Philadelphia Department of Public Health is provided to families and staff members every Tuesday so that they can make the best decisions for themselves and their children.

Staff Update: Published every Wednesday, staff members are provided with updates on employee policies, events, classroom news and procedures, all staff meetings, clinics and more.

Campus Connect: With an inspirational tone, this publication is produced every Friday as a way to keep us connected while we work remotely or participate in distance learning.



HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT KHOUNRIDY VISITH was a virtual student for the entirety of the 2020-21 school year.

"I liked that we were still able to attend school while being safe during the pandemic," said Khounridy. "But I hated that I couldn't get the hands-on and interactive help that I could have had in person."

With the help of her educational team and teacher, Khounridy worked on improving her assistive technology skills in order to read braille more independently.

"During the pandemic, I learned how to use my phone and the BrailleNote Polaris to access my schoolwork," said Khounridy. "I began to learn how to touch type which is something I never knew how to do before. I learned these things with help from the school. I used what I learned to keep practicing on my own time and figured out how to do other things based on what I knew I needed to do for school."

Her persistence paid off.

"I improved my knowledge of braille contractions," said Khounridy. "I was able to read braille more independently. I liked reading about Edgar Allen Poe in English class. I researched how events in his life affected his poetry and short stories. In class, we read, "The Masque of the Red Death." And I really enjoyed a March Madness Poetry competition in my English class. We made a bracket to guess who we thought would win. We listened to readings of lots of different types of poetry. We voted between two similar poems each day. We tried to guess what would be the most popular."

For Khounridy, the key to succeeding with distance learning was perseverance.

"I was successful because I fully participated in school during the year," said Khounridy. "I was able to fully use my technology by the end of the year without assistance. These new skills help me to do everything I need to do in school now. I can turn in assignments, do research, read and write materials for classes, and more."

OSB PROGRAMS 2020-2021

All of OSB's programs teach the Pennsylvania Core Standards and the Expanded Core Curriculum for Students with Visual Impairments. Students also receive related services as determined by their IEP (Individualized Educational Plan) team. These services can include: Physical Therapy, Occupational Therapy, Speech Therapy, Educational Audiology, Orientation and Mobility, Positive Behavior Support and Counseling. Students also have classes in art, music and physical education. Students ages 16 and older are eligible to participate in the residential White Hall Independent Living Program.

EARLY INTERVENTION OUTREACH (EIO)



Provides specialized services to children who are visually impaired ages birth to five and their families. Birth to three services are typically provided in the home, and three to five year olds receive services in preschools and daycare settings.

90% of parents learned how to set up accessible play and learning activities for their children

90% of parents reported observations of their children's successes/challenges to

their teachers during home visits

3 families made connections with other families in EIO to support each other

Approximately **5** students had a successful experience with cochlear implants and learned how to communicate through words as well as signs and gestures

At least **15** students made choices by using picture communication for toys, play and food

Approximately **30** students learned to wear their glasses throughout the day

90% of families learned how to implement sensory strategies to transition to different activities throughout their day

Approximately 24 children learned to crawl

20 students learned to use adapted mobility devices and canes

 teacher became more versed in how a child's neurological history can impact a student's visual history. This teacher feels
 confident speaking with parents about this topic.

100% of teachers in the EIO program coached families using tele-intervention

85% of families became advocates for their children during the transition process

EARLY CHILDHOOD

The campus-based component of the Early Intervention Program designed for children between the ages of three and five.

60% of parents participated in virtual learning activities so their children could successfully participate in instruction

19 children successfully transitioned out of Early Intervention into a School-age Program

Approximately **95%** of Early Childhood students successfully mastered one or two goals as indicated on their IEPs



100% of students who were diagnosed with CVI were given necessary accommodations and programming according to the recommendations

of their latest CVI Range both virtually or in person by their classroom teacher

Approximately **50%** of students learned how to successfully use their communication devices for instruction

Approximately **90%** of students had IEP revisions during the school year due to achievement of goals

6 Early Childhood staff took classes to further their knowledge in the field of vision, communication and supervision

ELEMENTARY PROGRAM

Along with academics, instruction includes mobility, communication and technology, and social skills for students six to ten years of age.

6 teachers discovered new and inventive ways to teach virtually and implement goals

1 classroom used in home and 5 senses scavenger hunts to promote senses and location



techniques with help from parents

All classrooms made interactive lessons and games by giving students control access to make choices virtually

5 classrooms utilized the Unique Learning

System Curriculum and the Help Kidz Learn app while learning virtually

1 classroom improved comprehension, visual awareness and attentiveness while engaging in virtual learning 1 classroom worked on math skills by following recipes with ingredients that the parents provided from their homes

MIDDLE SCHOOL PROGRAM

Students between the ages of 11 and 14 are immersed in classroom learning, daily living skills, assistive technology, and communication skills with a goal of functional independence.

24% students used braille

- **46%** students chose virtual instruction
- **54%** families chose on campus instruction

6 Students used Augmentative and Alternative Communication devices (virtual and in person)



HIGH SCHOOL PROGRAM

The High School Program serves students who are aged 15-18 yrs old.

60% of students came from Philadelphia County, **40%** from surrounding counties

18% of students used Augmentative and Alternative Communication Devices (AAC)

28% of students were bilingual

3 Students were enrolled in math classes at Brigham Young University

33% of students used braille as the primary learning mode

25% of students prepared and presented Powerpoint presentations for their IEP meetings

3 students started off campus jobs



SCHOOL TO WORK PROGRAM (STW)

After 12th grade, students gain additional work experience and prepare for college while taking college courses under the supervision of TVIs.

9 Students graduated from the School to Work Program

13 Students worked on-campus jobs:

- 1 STW Student worked in the Security Department
- 6 STW Students worked in the On-Campus Workshop
- 4 STW Students worked in the Pawprint Shop
- 2 STW Students stocked vending machines

15 STW Students

participated in on-campus Learning



11 STW Students participated in distance learning

2 STW Students participated in alternate learning plans

3 STW Students participated in White Hall

100% of STW Studentsmade progress on at least1 IEP goal

70% of STW Students received an award on Achievement Day

SCHOOL AGE ITINERANT SERVICES

OSB also provides itinerant services for school age students (K-12) at charter schools and school districts upon request.

70 Students received services

3 Counties served (Philadelphia, Delaware, Montgomery)

90% of students participated regularly in virtual services last year

97% of students with vision specific goals met the goal during their IEP term

50% of the students that use a cane increased their usage overall

71% of the students learned to use technology for O&M sessions

93% of students learned to use their technology independently

63% increase in parent involvement in their child's educational program

INTERNATIONAL PROGRAM

OSB promotes the use of assistive technology to expand education and employment opportunities for people with visual impairment in the Southeast Asia region.

Partner: Living Dignity for the Blind, provides training and other services in Myanmar

15 Students in smart phone user training52 Students in online computer training

8 Students in music training

Partner: Resources for the Blind, Inc., provides services and training in the Philippines

Virtual Computer-Eyes Camps for Beginners:

- 62 College and High School students
- 3 Adult students

Virtual Computer-Eyes Camps Advanced:

- 64 College and High School students
- 6 Adult students

Use of an accessible calculator on an android phone:

45 High School students

Math Award for girls: advocates equal access in STEM for visually impaired girls **21** High School students



DONOR PROFILE

"It's a cause that allows me as a donor to make a difference," said Sid Rosenblatt of the Rosenblatt Family Charitable Fund. "We can see the results from the support we provide. I look at the students, all of whom have challenges to overcome, and in their home communities, they are looked at differently than their non-disabled peers. At OSB, they are looked at as children and do all the things that all children do—learning, socializing, playing, laughing. They are free to be children, and to me, that's the most wonderful thing."

A long-time donor to Overbrook School for the Blind, Sid Rosenblatt and his family have supported OSB students, programs and construction for many years, going back to when he and his family lived across from the campus. His late wife, Christine, used to volunteer at OSB before becoming a board member.

"She was passionate about the school," said Rosenblatt. "It always had a place in her heart."

In 2019, in Christine's memory, Sid and his entire family joined students and staff to celebrate the grand opening of the M. Christine Murphy Horticulture and Education Center, a LEED-Gold certified and Net Zero Energy greenhouse that is now an accessible, sustainable headquarters for the OSB Farm to Table Program.

"That was one of the best experiences I've had giving a gift to OSB, building it and naming it," said Rosenblatt. "Every year, seeds are planted and growth takes place there, and it reminds me of Christine and everything she loved."

Another great example of how the Rosenblatt Family Charitable Fund improved one of OSB's programs was in the art room with their donation of a new ceramic kiln.

"[Art teacher] Susan DiFabio always reaches out to me when I'm on campus to thank me for the donation and what it contributes to the students in the art program," said Rosenblatt. "This means so much to me."

Looking to the future, Rosenblatt feels the CVI Clinic and the Accessibility Plan for the campus will make a significant difference in the lives of many children and their families.

"We have supported and will continue to support OSB," said Rosenblatt. "We want to make a difference in the lives of these students for a long time."



Sid with daughter Anna



Sid with son David



Sid, David, Todd Reeves and students at the Horticulture Center ribbon cutting ceremony



Art Teacher Susan DiFabio with Sid

A RESILIENT RESPONSE 13

SUPPORTERS 2020-2021

Thank you for your generosity and commitment to our students. As a donor, you are an essential part of our mission to enhance the lives of students with blindness, visual impairment, and other challenges. We have compiled a list of donors who made a gift from July 2020 through June 2021. We have made every effort to ensure accuracy. Please accept our apologies for an incorrect listing or omission, and let us know about the error by emailing development@obs.org.

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2020-21 FINANCIAL REVIEW

OPERATING REVENUES

TOTAL	\$26.807.300
Other Income	405,600
Gifts and Private Support	6,292,200
Government & Grants	1,500,700
State & Local Tuition	\$18,608,800

OPERATING EXPENSES

School Age	\$18,852,700
Preschool	6,175,700
Early Intervention	1,512,600
International Outreach	266,300
TOTAL	\$26,807,300

GIFTS TO THE SCHOOL

Overbrook School for the Blind is a private, non-profit educational organization that qualifies for tax-exempt contributions. There are many ways for individuals, organizations and corporations to support the School and its programs, including:

- A gift of cash made either directly or designated to the school through other agencies, such as the United Way or the Combined Federal Campaign. Overbrook's number with the United Way of Southeastern Pennsylvania is 00816
- A gift of cash, if made by an individual, may also qualify for a matching gift from the donor's employer
- A gift in memory of or in honor of a relative or a friend
- In-kind gifts of services, goods, equipment, or property
- A gift of appreciated securities or real estate, outright or deferred
- A gift of a life insurance policy, designating the school as the beneficiary
- A charitable gift annuity, which in addition to helping the school, provides the donor or a designee with a regular stream of income
- A gift by will. Those who wish to make a personal bequest to the school may use the following language: "I hereby give, devise, and bequeath to Overbrook School for the Blind, a corporation duly organized and existing under the laws of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, the sum of _____ dollars (\$_____). I direct that this sum be applied to the general uses and purposes of the corporation under the direction of its Board of Trustees."

For additional information about methods of giving and other ways of supporting the school, please visit the Donate section of www.obs.org or contact:

Development Office, Overbrook School for the Blind 6333 Malvern Avenue, Philadelphia, PA 19151 Tel: 215.877.0313, ext. 264 Fax: 215.689.0401 E-mail: pamela.mcgonigle@obs.org



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While out on an orientation and mobility lesson, high school student Alex learned about the APS (Accessible Pedestrian Signal) right outside of OSB's front gate. The APS is a push button that communicates when to cross the street in a non-visual manner, by using audible tones, speech messages, and vibrating surfaces.

COMFORT

1300

START CROS. Watch For Vehicles

DON'T STAR

Finish Crossil If Started

TIME REMAINING TO Finish Crossi

DON'T CROSS

PUSH BUTTON

TO CROSS

R

STEAD

... thank you for your continued generosity and commitment to changing the lives of students with vision loss and other challenges.



