

VOYAGES



Summer '19 (left) and Victoria '16 (right)

Above And Beyond

Here's a brainteaser for you...

Who is an essential part of the photograph on this page, yet invisible to the naked eye?

Any guesses? Perhaps some background will help.

Meet Summer '19 and Victoria '16. Summer is a rising senior at Dartmouth High School where she leads the "Girls Who Code" club. Victoria will be in her third year at Wentworth Institute of Technology pursuing her Bachelor of Science degree in Mechanical Engineering.

On a sunny April day, the two OSS graduates met after Summer toured the Wentworth

campus. Over lunch, Victoria reflected on college life in Boston, her education at Wentworth, and being part of a largely male student body. She also shared her strategies for ensuring her voice is heard in small group work, where she is often the only woman. In the above photograph, they stand near a bronze statue of Wentworth's mascot – a fierce and valiant leopard that "*signifies such traits as bravery, swiftness, triumph, and engagement in hazardous enterprises.*"

OK – have you figured out our brainteaser yet? Spoiler alert! If you answered, "*the photographer,*" you are right! But *only* partially so!

In this case, the photographer did more than simply capture a moment. She proposed introducing the two students and arranged the meeting. She coordinated the formal visit to Wentworth and even accompanied Summer and her stepmom. (Earlier that week, she joined the two for a similar tour at Bridgewater State

University.) *And* she has extended an open offer to all OSS graduates to drive and accompany them to college visits as well.

The person behind it all is Amy Sanders, our Director of Secondary School Placement and Graduate Support. Ms. Sanders joined OSS in the Spring of 2020 – right when the pandemic began. A leopard in her own right, Ms. Sanders quickly made progress nonetheless – strengthening, expanding, and re-imagining the ways in which OSS supports all its graduates.

Ms. Sanders exemplifies the spirit of dedication that fuels so many at OSS. This issue highlights how that spirit helps to make a profound difference in our students' lives.



Amy Sanders

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Supporting Our Graduates

Amy Sanders explains – she’s not a guidance counselor. “They have a huge and under-appreciated job.” With a counselor-to-student ratio of 1:255, administrative responsibilities, and record levels of student anxiety, high school counselors have little time to help students think through their goals and plans.



Ms. Sanders (left) and Ms. Eugenio (right) visiting Alejandra '18 (center) at her play at Noble & Greenough

The Facts of the Matter

Many students rely on parents’ experiences, contacts, and other resources to prepare and apply for college admission. Others don’t have that option – and it shows. A study of 38 U.S. universities counted more students from families in the top

1% income tier than from the entire lower 60%.

Ms. Sanders, a former history teacher, began focusing on this problem as a volunteer, helping refugees and immigrants wade through complicated application and financial aid processes. She

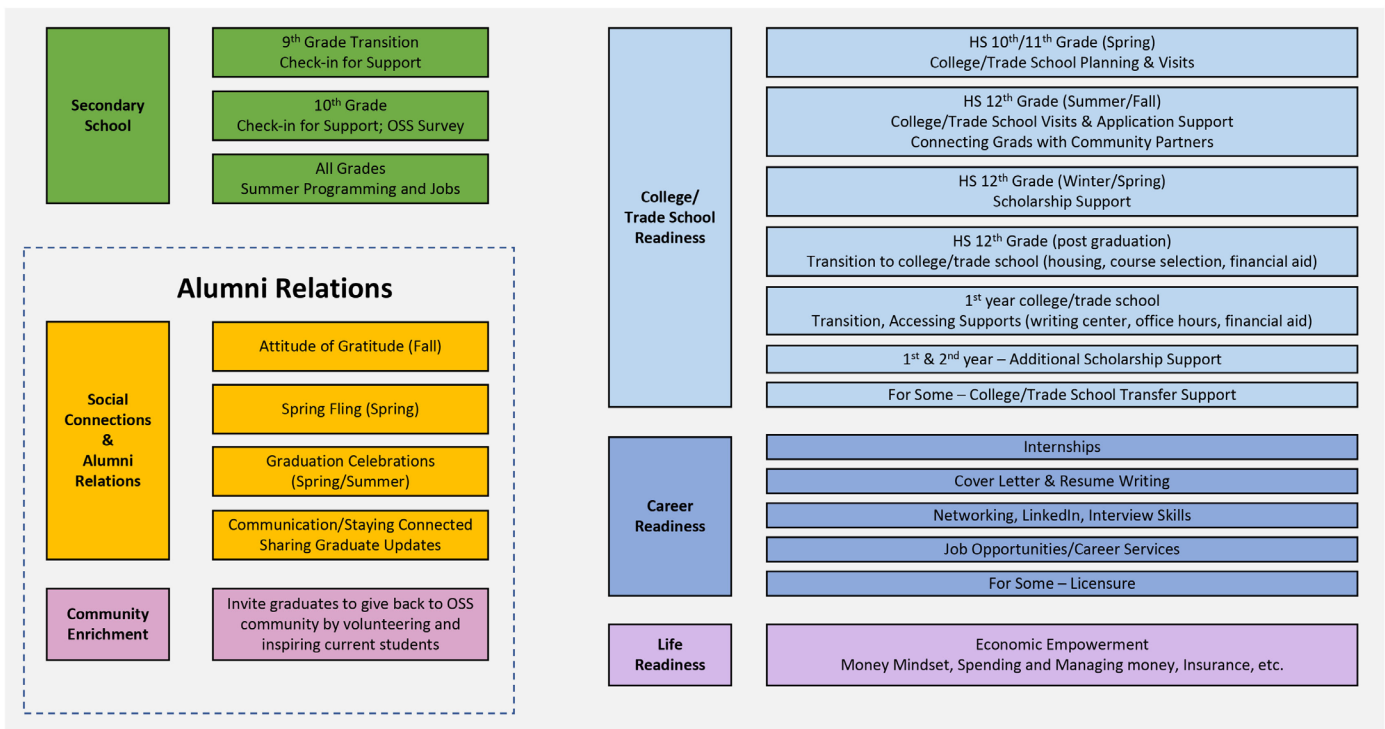
continued to assist through their first year of college. “It’s easy to underestimate how hard that transition is.” Nationwide, 10-30% of high school graduates with plans for post-secondary education fail to enroll. This phenomenon most often affects low-income students, especially

those without support after high school.

Seeing the impact of her efforts, Ms. Sanders pursued coursework at Columbia’s Teachers College before becoming our Director of Secondary School Placement and Graduate Support.

OSS Graduate Support Office

(includes Staff, Volunteers, Graduate Ambassadors)



Structured Support

In the past, OSS graduate support focused on encouraging graduates to stay connected with each other and with OSS as they moved into the future. Now, the program also offers support at every step.

One of the program's first initiatives was a comprehensive website supporting graduates through all stages of school and career development. It is updated with summer programs, jobs and internships, a college planning guide, and more.

College planning often begins in junior year. Ms. Sanders offers students and families help

“The evolution of this program has been fascinating. We learn, pivot, and grow with each new class of graduates.”

*Betsy Kellogg,
Chair, OSS Graduate
Support Committee*

mapping out their plan and finding resources. She assists with tasks like securing housing and registering for classes, and, for those entering the workforce, resume writing and job searching. Graduates can also request academic and other support.

“Connection is still key, though,” Ms. Sanders says. Reflecting on former students who return as volunteers, Ms. Sanders envisions a network of OSS graduates helping each other reach their individual academic, career, and personal goals. She is paving a path toward that vision.

Personalized Care

What matters most to Ms. Sanders is what each graduate wants to achieve. *“We’re not here to shepherd students along a particular path,”* she explains. *“We’re here to support them as they take flight.”*

Hearing from graduates about what they would value most is helping define new program resources, such as financial workshops we recently held for families and for alumni.

As one graduate commented, *“Just knowing that this support is here reminds me that I owe it to myself to reach out and see what might benefit me.”*

To Ms. Sanders, this is the most important message – the one she wants all 163 (and counting) OSS graduates to be aware of. *“I’m relatively new,”* she reminds us, *“And I came in during the pandemic, when I couldn’t meet many of our graduates in person. I want them to know that I’m here – and this program is here – for all of them.”*

“Amy was such a help to my daughters, and to me. She was with us through the highs and lows, like a member of the family.”

Kristen Mendes, P ’17, ’22

THE SPIRIT OF OSS



Malian master drummer Sidy Maiga and his band treated OSS students, families, and friends to a rousing outdoor performance at our Block Party this spring. Sidy is the winner of Rhode Island’s 2022 Folk Arts Fellowship and

the producer of Afrika Nyaga, an annual drum and dance festival in Providence. He is also a music instructor at OSS. At the start of the second set of the Block Party, his African drum students bravely strutted their stuff with a performance that delighted their audience.

OSS graduate Ava Faria ’16 was in the crowd that evening, on break from her studies at Brandeis University. She had good news to share – she’d just received grant funding for an internship at OSS to help with summer programming!

That evening, members of our community who came together simply for music, pizza, face painting and games, saw and enjoyed so much of what makes OSS special:

- The beauty of our Outdoor Classroom.
- The talent and dedication of our faculty and staff.
- The confident, skillful, joyful self-expression of our students.
- The quality and variety of learning that happens here.
- The strength of our partnership with OSS families.
- The support we get from the wider community.
- The bond we maintain with our graduates.
- The respect and care we have for each other.

I’m lucky – I get to see this every day, in countless ways! In this issue, you’ll learn about just a few of the ways in which this spirit takes shape at our school. It’s never hard for us to find examples of people and programs that go above and beyond. What’s hard for us is knowing that so many of those stories are left untold! Thankfully, it’s a good problem to have!

Sarah Herman, Head of School

Summer's Advantage

Are you ready for another brainteaser?

Q: How do you know you go to one of the *best* schools ever?

A: You want to come back during summer vacation!



For most of us, the idea of returning to school during summer break might have felt more like a punishment than a treat. However, who among us could choose to row, sail, kayak, or paddleboard at Community Boating or the New Bedford Rowing Center? Or bike, swim, and snorkel with Youth Opportunities Unlimited?

Perhaps we would've been enticed by clay-making with the New Bedford Art Museum, or caring for goats, chickens, and pigs at Round the Bend Farm. Head of School, Sarah Herman, admits she would've jumped at the chance to join Circus

Up – an on-campus circus arts activity happening alongside Art, STEAM, and Fitness programs this summer.

“It’s a time ripe for learning and growth – it’s important to OSS and to our students.”

Sarah Herman

Many of our students will attend sleepaway camps across New England with scholarships facilitated by OSS. Among these sleepaway adventures are a session at St. Andrew’s School combining math and science with swimming and surfing, and

a Brown University pre-college STEM program. Both will give students a taste of an on-campus experience this summer.

In total, we have connected over 80% of our students with fun summer activities this year – more than half will attend OSS programs. We’re also offering a free “OSS Style” program to New Bedford area third- and fourth-graders interested in Art and STEAM.

The quality of summer experience often widens the achievement gap between students from different economic backgrounds. Families who

can regularly afford summer camps, travel, sports, and other invigorating summer activities help broaden student perspectives, engage their interests, and further develop their skills and confidence. The OSS enriching summer programs do the same.

“Summer goes quickly, but it’s a full quarter of the year,” Sarah Herman, would-be circus performer, reminds us. “It’s a time ripe for learning and growth – it’s important to OSS and to our students.”

Paving The Way

Brainteaser #3: Who are the youngest OSS students to go to college?

A: Our entire class of seventh- and eighth-graders!

It's true! This year, OSS students piloted a new Bridgewater State University (BSU) program called *Engineering a Better World*. And can you guess who helped create the curriculum? We did! Well, our STEAM instructor Ms. Tobey Eugenio and the STEAM team, to be exact.

“Our project didn’t initially work and we got to problem-solve alternative ideas like in real-life situations. It was so cool!”

Hannah '23

“OSS was involved from development through implementation,” says Dr. Jennie Aizenman, Director of BSU’s Center for the Advancement of STEM Education. Funded by the American Association of University Women and in partnership with the National Society of Black Engineers, the program encourages girls’ interest and education in STEM fields.

Over the course of four weeks, our students worked with BSU professors, female STEM mentors, and OSS staff to use engineering concepts to help address natural disasters. In small teams, they focused on five projects:

- **Emergency Communications** – Wire and program a device to communicate life-saving information.



- **Clean Water Access** – Eliminate unsafe waterborne contaminants.
- **Thermal Imaging for Rescue** – Engineer and test an infrared camera under varying conditions.
- **Wind Resistant Homes** – Design and build prototypes and test them in the BSU wind tunnel.
- **Preventing Coastal Erosion** – Develop vegetation solutions and test them in the BSU wind tunnel.

“Our students loved the whole experience – especially the two campus visits,” says Ms. Eugenio.

With the pilot successfully completed, BSU now plans to

expand this program to other schools. Dr. Aizenman reflects on working with OSS. “What stands out is how dedicated the teachers and school leadership are in ensuring that every minute spent with students is meaningful.”

“It was awesome. I got to see what I really liked about college and it allowed me to see myself on a college campus in the future.”

Giovanna '23



ALUMNI NEWS

Kylee Almeida '15 graduated from Barry University with a degree in Psychology and was accepted into Barry's MS Clinical Psychology Program.

Olimpia Andrade '16 was awarded a scholarship to continue her studies in Political Science on a pre-law track at Spelman College.

Amaya Faria '14 is fulfilling her childhood dream of modeling and has been signed to top agencies in both New York and LA. Amaya says, *"Things are moving so quickly right now, but also I've been working my whole life for this!"*

Ava Faria '16 returned to OSS this year as a Morning Speaker to share her passion for travel and helping others. She is studying Global Public Health at Brandeis University and was awarded the WOW fellowship, which she will complete at OSS supporting our summer '22 programming. Ava hopes to study abroad in South Africa next year and is considering a five-year joint Master's program.

Kianna Fonseca '13 was promoted to Housing Coordinator Supervisor at Eliot Community Human Services in Dorchester.

Victoria Jorge '16 is working for a manufacturing company in the New Bedford area over summer break. As part of Wentworth Institute of Technology's required co-op experience, she plans to work at the same firm next spring as an engineering assistant.

Katherine Maldonado Montoya '18 was one of four area students awarded a four-year grant from the SouthCoast Community Foundation to support her STEM-focused academic pursuits. She will be attending UMass Dartmouth to study Computer Science in the fall.

Beatrice Ojuri '14 graduated UMass Amherst this spring, and has moved to Baltimore to do autism research at the Kennedy Krieger Institute at Johns Hopkins Medicine. She's working at the Center of Neurodevelopmental & Imaging Research, and her goal is to obtain a PhD in neuropsychology!

Tashy Pires '12 launched Taj Collective, <https://tajcollective.co>, her clay earrings business in 2020. Tashy sells her jewelry on her website and at local events, like Buy Black NB pop-up markets. She says, *"I believe jewelry should make you feel comfortable and confident in your own skin and so it is my goal to provide a safe, chic outlet for self-expression, self-love, and positivity!"*

Alanee Rose-Wheatley '15 earned a place on both the Honor Roll and the President's List this year at Southern New Hampshire University where she is studying Psychology. She and her mother, Andrea, run Crafted by A&A, a business making and selling macrame products. Check them out on Instagram at [craftedbya_a](https://www.instagram.com/craftedbya_a) or find them at a local Buy Black NB pop-up market!

Dalymar Ruiz-King '12 works as a therapeutic mentor at the Justice Resource Institute. She loves getting kids out into the community and has truly enjoyed seeing clients in person this year. Daly is pursuing a Master's degree in Social Work at Bridgewater State University. In addition, she works as a server *and* she walks and trains dogs!

Isadora Sylvia-Ribeiro '18 led the OSS Friday drama club, and was excited to be back on stage with the New Bedford High School Drama Club for performances of *The Skin of Our Teeth* and *GodSpell* this past year. Isadora will head to Northeastern University to study environmental justice this fall.

Maya Tavares '14, Jael Costa '14 and OSS Creativity Director Tobey Eugenio's daughter, Hannah, all graduated together from the UMass Dartmouth College of Nursing. They met at OSS and remained friends throughout college. Maya is working at the cardiac step-down unit at Charlton Hospital. Jael graduated magna cum laude and won the Frederick Douglass Diversity and Service award. Hannah graduated with a BSN and minor in Global Health, and is working in the intensive care unit at St. Luke's Hospital.

Janice Wang '20 started a business called Sincerely Me Cakes. She enjoys baking when she's not busy at Bishop Stang High School, and her desserts are both beautiful and delicious!



Beatrice '14 on a recent visit at OSS



Isadora '18 and the OSS drama club

The Class of 2018 will be attending:

Bennington College
 Brandeis University
 Bristol Community College
 Brown University
 Endicott College
 Northeastern University
 Pomona College
 UMass Dartmouth
 Yale University

The Class of 2022 will be attending:

Bristol County Agricultural High School
 Dartmouth High School
 Greater New Bedford Vocational-Technical High School
 New Bedford High School, Academy of Honors
 Tabor Academy

#ShoutoutsOSS

Two OSS teachers were recognized for their unwavering dedication to their craft and their students.

Math teacher and Student Council Co-Leader **Katelyn Rapoza** received the 2022 Red Sox Award. The nominating parent said “*Ms. Rapoza embodies the belief that a teacher’s impact extends over a lifetime...*”

Katelyn joined OSS in 2013 and we are so thankful for her as she embarks on her 10th year with us! **Katie Mosca**, health teacher and member of our STEAM/Creative Suite team was named October 2021 SouthCoast Teacher of the Month by Fun 107, the SouthCoast music station. Katie joined OSS in 2018 and was nominated by a member of the eighth-grade class. She was lauded for her fun and

engaging classroom environment, as well as the support she shows students both in and out of the classroom. Thank you Katelyn and Katie for all you do to make OSS spectacular!

All 17 members of our eighth-grade class entered



Duyen '22

their designs to the 2021 DATMA/ New Bedford Whaling National Historical Park Logo Design Challenge. Students shared their work with family, friends, and community members at the Park’s MakerSpace during November’s “Made in New Bedford” AHA night. **Duyen '22** won first place, and Honorable Mentions were awarded to **Anysis '22 and Kiara '22** for their outstanding work.

Don’t miss DATMA’s 2022 “Shelter” exhibit where OSS students join the ranks of esteemed local artists Fitzcarmel LaMarre and Alison Wells to share the story of the New Bedford abolition movement. DATMA collaborated with New Bedford Historical Society and the New Bedford Whaling National Historical Park for this free outdoor event in downtown New Bedford. Check it out June 16 - September 12!

Six OSS students displayed their work in the statewide Youth Art Month Exhibit. They showcased their skills in painting, photography, and digital art in this virtual exhibit. Shoutouts to **Alex '22, Attyanna '23, Giselle '22, Maia '22, Nishaye '22, and Skylar '23.**

After a two-month hiatus, the Dartmouth Cultural Center reopened with a new exhibit celebrating the artwork of OSS students. Each of our 65 students submitted at least one piece of original artwork

which they handpicked and priced to sell. Creativity Director Tobey Eugenio praised this project for teaching students both entrepreneurship and fundraising as a portion of each commission supported the Center.

Twelve OSS students entered their work in this year’s Scholastic Art and Writing Contest, “*the nation’s longest-running, most prestigious recognition program for creative teens.*” For the first time in OSS history, our students brought home three awards! **Nishaye '22** and **Samara '22** were each awarded the Scholastic Art Silver Key, and **Samara '22** also earned an Honorable Mention for her work. Other participating students included **Adrianna '22, Alexandra '22, Allison '23, Anyis '22, Attyanna '23, Daishaly '23, Giselle '22, Priseis '22, Maia '22, and Maddie '22.**

Nishaye '22 won this year’s New Bedford Free Public Library Black History Month Grand Prize Teen Entry for her Equality Quilt. She designed this quilt to shed light on the history of systemic racism in America, the progress we have made and the work that remains.

Earlier this year, **Alina '24, Daishaly '23 and Gia '23** represented OSS in the International Coalition of Girls’ Schools (ICGS) civic leadership program. Building on our core values of *Community, Excellence, Civic Engagement, and Leadership*, these exceptional students attended workshops to learn effective ways to engage with diverse communities about pressing current issues.

This June, as part of the ICGS Global Forum on Girls’ Education® III, Ms. Tobey Eugenio, along with five students and one graduate presented on the power of outdoor classrooms in Boston. The session entitled, “Outdoor Classroom Design: Innovative Learning Spaces+Real Tools+Design Challenges,” was led by **Aliana '25, Anysis '22, Ava Faria '16, Daishaly '23, Gia '23 and Lily '24.**



Ms. Mosca (left) and Ms. Rapoza (right)

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Photography: Kim Goddard, OSS Staff, Val Silva

As an independent, tuition-free, non-sectarian middle school, our mission is to educate and inspire economically disadvantaged girls from the New Bedford area. OSS empowers girls to step into the future with valuable life skills and a mindset of achievement and excellence by providing a safe, supportive, and academically challenging environment.

Our school's name honors the bravery of the women known as "sister sailors" who boldly headed out to sea from New Bedford's harbor during the city's whaling days. Like these women, OSS students courageously embark on a voyage in a challenging academic environment carefully crafted to support them as they discover and achieve their greatest potential, while finding true north on their moral compass.



SUPPORT THE OSS FUND

Unlike charter schools, OSS is not eligible for state funding as a single-sex school and we rely solely on our friends and foundations. Your generosity makes it possible for OSS to provide a transformative education to our girls. Make a gift today at oursistersschool.org or contact Georgie Goulding, Director of Advancement, at ggoulding@oursistersschool.org or 508.994.1255, to discuss the different ways you can help OSS.

PLANNING AHEAD WITH TRUE NORTH

Make a gift that will help secure OSS's future and prepare our students to live lives of consequence. Join others in the True North Legacy Society by naming OSS as a beneficiary in your estate planning, while meeting your current financial and philanthropic goals with tax benefits. You will make a lasting contribution to educating students and nurturing human potential.

ANTI-RACISM STATEMENT

At Our Sisters' School, we are committed to an inclusive and diverse community, dedicated to our core values of Excellence, Community, Civic Engagement, and Leadership. We condemn all forms of racism — individual, interpersonal, institutional, and systemic. We will be diligent in identifying, discussing, and challenging issues of race and ethnicity to ensure diversity, equity, and inclusion in all of our work, including student, staff, volunteer, and trustee recruitment, anti-racist curriculum development, and community engagement. We pledge to address any inequities we discover, using just and fair practices to yield a better understanding of ourselves and our school.

NON-DISCRIMINATION STATEMENT

Our Sisters' School, Inc. admits girls as students to the School regardless of their race, color, national or ethnic origin, religion, creed, or sexual orientation. The School does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national or ethnic origin, religion, creed, or sexual orientation in administration of its educational policies, admissions policies, scholarship programs, athletic and other school administered programs.

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