

Highlighter

From the Principal's Desk

Dear Parents and Guardians,

I have had the pleasure of working in the Oyster River School District now for going on 27 years. Throughout my time in this district I have been consistently amazed at the high quality of kids we have in our school community. When I used to coach middle school track I can remember going to away meets and after watching kids from other schools behave poorly thinking to myself, "I am so happy to teach at Oyster River." At the risk of sounding elitist, our kids are simply amazing. They understand what is expected of them and they raise their performance to meet high expectations. Now that I have been here at the high school for a few months those feelings of pride and amazement in our students are stronger than ever. I have been blown away by the range of talents, interests and levels of civic engagement shown by our student body.

The Community Service Program is one area that our kids really shine. There are over 150 students that volunteer their time on a regular basis to a variety of worthwhile charitable causes. There are kids volunteering at the Salvation Army Soup Kitchen, visiting the elderly, working at the Cocheco Valley Human Society, volunteering with the Special Olympics, running the 5th grade mentor program, reading to students at the elementary schools and organizing Relay for Life. What makes this program all the more impressive is that the students do all of the organizational work. Each activity is student driven. Advisors Sue Wilkinson and Kathy Pearce facilitate all of the projects but it is the kids who run each charitable effort. It is great to see our kids getting the chance to use their talents to show their charitable sides.

ORHS also has many teams and clubs that often don't get a lot of attention but none-the-less show the best side of our student body. Examples of this are our First Robotics Team, the Drama Club, the Math Team, the Spanish Club, French Club, the Mouth of the River, the National Honor Society, the Russian Exchange Program and the literary magazine. In all of these activities the students commit hours of their time to endeavors that they are passionate about. It's impressive to see all that our students are capable.

ORHS students are also environmentally conscious. There are multiple student driven efforts in the building to help the environment. Mr. Bromley's Environmental Science students are actively trying to encourage sustainable practices throughout the school. They have efforts under way to encourage a range of environmentally friendly concepts from composting to buying locally to energy conservation. Additionally we have students doing beach clean-up as well as those encouraging recycling. The environmental concern of our students is wonderful to see.

The ORHS student body is full of caring and talented kids who are willing to step up and take action to make their school a better place. This is truly a remarkable place to work and go to school because of it.

Sincerely, Todd Allen

If you want to learn more about student clubs and activities go to the following link on our school district web page. Also, feel free to email me at tallen@orcsd.org or call me at 868-2375, X6001 anytime you have a question or concern.

http://www.orcsd.org/school/orhs/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=188&Itemid=190

STITCHING FRIENDSHIP

As many of you know, students from Severodvinsk, Russia visited ORHS this November. Social Studies teachers arranging for their visit asked if they could participate in any of the Family and Consumer Sciences classes. Although the Russian students enjoyed a cheese tasting with the Foods and Nutrition I students, their favorite class was more hands on.

About ten of the students attended the Clothing I & II/Fiber Arts Class over three days. They were shown how to create a signature quilt block. The ORHS students enrolled in these classes completed their own blocks the week before so they would be prepared to coach the Russians. Severodvinsk City Gymnasium, their school, does not offer any Family and Consumer Science classes. Operating a sewing machine was a brand new experience for both the girls and boys. After several tries, they successfully sewed and signed their blocks. They were asked to leave them behind when they left. They were reluctant to do so but were assured they would see their blocks again.

The blocks created by our own ORHS students have been mixed in with those created by the Russian students and now surround two blocks that name our sister schools. This Signature Friendship Quilt will be finished by ORHS students and presented to the Russians by a delegation of visiting ORHS students next spring.



ORHS Junior Achievement Stock Market Student Challenge

Thursday 12/1 Economics students entered into the Junior Achievement Stock Market Student Challenge. The challenge was to buy and sell shares of fictitious companies starting with \$500,000. ORHS Challengers grew their portfolio to \$839,155. They had to pay attention to the news releases in the game and watch the trends of different industries, making fast decisions. Each trading day was only one minute long. Griffin Sinclair-Wingate, Chad Burns and Brennan Young represented Oyster River quite well placing 11th out of 40 teams in this challenge.



ORHS Music Department

ORHS World Cultures classes collaborate with World Drumming classes:

In November, three of the ORHS freshman World Cultures Classes, taught by Karen Van Dyke, Pam Raiford & Mary Nolin, joined forces with Mr. LaForce and the music department for a day to learn some West African drumming. The classes have been studying and doing projects on Africa for the past several weeks and we were fortunate to be able to get together (due to some brainstorming with ORHS Arts Integration specialist Maria Rosi) and teach the freshman some basic strokes and patterns that we all performed together in a giant drum circle. Mr. LaForce's World Drumming class students contributed lessons on drum technique and rhythm to two of the three presentations.

Oyster River Music Students Earn All State and Jazz All State Honors:

Oyster River music students **Jennifer Taylor** (Grade 11, soprano voice) and **Nathaniel Spence** (Grade 11, Tenor Voice) earned acceptance into the New Hampshire Music Educators' Association Jazz All State Festival, held February 2-4 2012 at Windham High School. They will travel to Windham for 3 days to work with their respective groups and then present a concert on Saturday afternoon. Jennifer had the top score in the state of NH in her division.

The All State Mixed Chorus, part of the NHMEA All State Festival, has two members from Oyster River High School who were accepted by audition. **Catherine Geiger** (Grade 10, Alto Voice) and **Nathaniel Spence** (Grade 11, Bass Voice) will represent us at the festival, held in Concord NH from April 12-14, 2012. They will rehearse for 2 days then perform in a public concert at the Capitol Center for the Arts in Concord on April 14th, 2012.



ORHS WORLD LANGUAGE NEWS

On November 9th Oyster River High School language celebrated our 22nd semi-annual World Language Festival with more than 300 friends and family members in attendance. The French and Spanish 3, 4, and 5 classes performed in plays completely in French and Spanish. The level 3 classes presented classic fairy tales like Fric and Frac, The 3 Billy Goats Gruff, and Rumpelstiltskin. The level 4 students had fun with The Wizard of Oz and the level 5 students wrote and performed their own versions of A Charlie Brown Christmas and Harry Potter. We look forward to seeing you on March 22 at the Spring World Language Festival with the Spanish and French 1 and 2 classes.

The Oyster River High School Spanish Club recently had a poinsettia sale to help support the Nurses' Holiday Fund. Student participants raised money to help buy turkeys for Thanksgiving baskets. We would like to thank Wentworth Gardens in Dover for working with us and all community members who purchased a plant.

Viaje a Puerto Rico – Las Senoras Beaton and Gibson will be taking a group of 15 Spanish 3, 4 and 5 students to Puerto Rico in April. Students will immerse themselves in the culture and language of Puerto Rico during the 5 day trip and have pledged to embrace all opportunities to communicate in Spanish. There will be day trips to explore Old San Juan, Ponce and La Parguera, a visit to a local elementary school for community service, a swim in a bioluminescent bay and a trip to El Yunque –Puerto Rico's Rainforest. Students will also learn to "Salsa" so be sure to ask for a demonstration when they return!

The French Club at ORHS

Felicitations (Congratulations) to the new officers of the French Club.

President: : Jamila Piel
Secretary: Naomi Schmidt

Vice President: Gina DiDonna
Treasurer: Stefan Dutka

The club is not a closed club. Any student in French class can participate in any of the Club sponsored activities. The French Club holds a variety of activities throughout the year. So far this year they have sponsored a film night.

Two upcoming activities:



December 14, 2011 - Bake sale. Every French student is encouraged to bring baked goods into his/her teacher on Wednesday, December 14. The items should be individually wrapped.



December 21, 2011 - There will be a French Club get together at 6PM at the high school. This is a holiday get together with cookie decorating, singing and gift wrapping gifts for the needy. In addition, there will be a "Yankee" swap!! Bring a wrapped gift with a value of no more than \$5.00 if you want to be part of the swap.

Spanish Club at ORHS

Congratulations to Officers :

President: John Parsons (Juan)
Secretary: Sam Owens (Samuel)

Vice President : Brennan Young (El Joven)
Treasurer: Laurel Gibson (Carmen)



ORHS Drama Department

The Oyster River High School Drama Department will be performing **"On My Way"**, a Night of Scenes, Song and Dance **January 27th at 7:00 p.m.** Performances from West Side Story, Wicked and Into the Woods, to name a few, will be presented. Directed by Meredith Freeman-Caple, Choreographed by Alden Caple, this evening will be a joy to experience.

News from ORHS Library

The library has been a bustling hub of activity this fall, with a wide variety of activities taking place. In addition to the day-to-day high school activities, we played host to our Russian visitors who enjoyed using our technology to keep connected with their families and friends back home via email, Facebook, and Skype. Our PEP students began their weekly library visits in October for story time and our Reading Buddies program is up and running with sixteen high school students volunteering to read to our PEP kids. It's hard to tell, at this point, who is more excited about the program, as both the "big kids" and the "little kids" frequently ask if it's a Reading Buddies week.

As always, the backbone of the library program is our collaborations with classroom teachers to improve students research and information literacy skills through content area work. We've collaborated with many classes already this year including Mass Media, Anatomy and Physiology, World Literature, and Issues in Literature. The most extensive of these collaborations has been with Ms. Van Dyke's U.S. History class, which is currently engaged in an in-depth study of and independent research about the American Civil War. As part of this unit, Ms. Pearce and Ms. VanDyke have co-taught lessons on note taking, paraphrasing and plagiarism and organized a panel discussion with UNH professors Brad Kinsey and Julia Rodriguez who discussed the research they conduct and the pitfalls that students sometimes encounter while conducting research.

Speaking of research, if you haven't already done so, please visit the library web site, where you will find a variety of resources. Our online databases are password protected, but we keep them simple so that students can easily remember them. If you or your child doesn't know how to access them, please drop us a line. We can't publish the password here, but we would be happy to email it to you. Also on the site are links for help with citing sources, a slide show of the most recent books to be added to the collection, and student book reviews, and a link to our catalog. The library may be open 7:15-3:30, but many of our resources are available for you 24 hours a day.



Oyster River Russian Exchange, November 2011 Our 23rd Year

Oyster River High School celebrated 23 years of successful exchanges with schools in Russia by playing host to 15 students and teachers from Severodvinsk, Russia last month. They were able to participate in many activities in and around school. One fieldtrip was to Boston where we went to the top of the Prudential Building. A big hit were the performers in Boston Common and meeting some of Boston's Park Rangers as well.



Our visitors were able to visit New Hampshire's Capitol Building in Concord where they were able to meet Durham Senator Amanda Merrill and Rep. Tim Horrigan.



The students and teachers from Severodvinsk demonstrated traditional Northern Russia music and dancing at an assembly in the multi-purpose room. In a true display of our community connection to our friends from Severodvinsk, both Russian and American students and teachers participated as evidenced by Ms. VanDyke and Anton Burmagin below.

Like many Oyster River students, they are talented artists. One Severodvinsk student painted a picture of famed Russian scientist Mikhail Lomonosov and presented it to ORHS principal Todd Allen just before they returned home.



Field Trips: Bringing Class Lessons to Life

Black History Trail: American Studies I and American Literature I classes took a field trip to the Black History Trail in Portsmouth, NH on November 14th. Students acted as tour guides after studying two or three sites on the trail in advance of the trip. See photos below for a taste of the experience. Kiersten Anderson, Phoebe Lamont, and Adelia Couser (L to R) are our featured tour guides!



Button Factory: Journalism and Video Production students went to the Button Factory in Portsmouth, NH on November 14th to interview artists and craftspeople. With the Journalism students as the producers and the Video Production students as the editors, the classes collaborated to create a series of broadcast journalism pieces.



Class Activities: Getting Involved in Issues That Matter

American Studies I – Students in Mrs. Engstrom and Mr. Hawley’s team-taught humanities course are exploring the role of women in early American history through Arthur Miller’s rendering of Puritan society in *The Crucible* by reading and discussing the play in the auditorium.

British Literature II – Students celebrated St. Andrew’s Day (patron saint of Scotland) with Mr. Brewer on November 30th by reading poems from Scotland’s national poet, Robbie Burns, playing Scottish songs and discussing some of the country’s history.

Debate & Persuasion – Students in Ms. Sullivan’s Debate & Persuasion class have started their second debate style, which is called Cross-Examination. The topics for this round of debates are as follows: School Uniforms, Farm Subsidies and Mandatory Military Service. This latest round of debates is being filmed in the video studio by Mrs. Young’s Video Production students.

Mass Media and Popular Culture – Students in Ms. Horsley’s media analysis courses are set to begin their culminating project for the year: The Human Research Project. Students develop questions related to concepts for media deconstruction to explore the impact of the mass media on society, relationships and culture. By conducting interviews, surveys, studies, and through scholarly research, students will discover the answers to their questions.

2011-2012 ORHS Poet Laureate Named

Sophomore Daniel Belshaw was named the 2011-2012 ORHS Poet Laureate at the Durham Public Library at a reading ceremony put on by the English Department and the Durham Public Library staff. He was honored with a legacy hat and a monetary reward along with the title, and he will be involved in a variety of endeavors to promote poetry in our school community, including Poetry Out Loud. Feel free to check out photos from the event at the following site: http://web.me.com/jredbelshaw/PoetLaureate2011/2011_Finalist_Reading.html

Save the Date: Poetry Out Loud! January 10, 2012 6:30 ORHS Auditorium

Please consider making it a night out with the Empty Bowls Dinner at 5:00 in the ORHS Cafeteria. Come see students from a variety of classes recite classic and contemporary poetry. Recently named ORHS Poet Laureate Daniel Belshaw will act as MC, and the ORHS Jazz Band will provide musical entertainment.

Snow Date: January 11, 2012



Next issue of ORHS Highlighter will be published February 6, 2011. Questions, comments?

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