

OUR SISTERS' SCHOOL

DARE to
DREAM

*Celebrating our
first 15 years*





OSS ribbon cutting on October 1, 2008



LISA SCHMID ALVORD

Founding Chair Emerita

Lisa is still moved by thoughts of that first opening day. *“It only happened because of generous supporters and a band of volunteers who did everything from assembling the desks to mentoring the teachers! We opened in 2008 with eight faculty members, two grades, and 30 students.”* Two additional grades, 15 years and 163 graduates later, OSS is better equipped than ever to educate and inspire underserved girls from our area.

As OSS has matured, Lisa explains, the students themselves have inspired a deeper understanding of the School’s role in young girls’ lives. *“Success isn’t only about academic achievements. It’s also about girls finding their voice and their purpose, and then using these to lift the community. That is truly our school’s heart and soul.”*

“Success...about girls finding their voice and their purpose...”



OSS Outdoor Classroom



KATELYN RAPOZA

Math teacher

Like all of our earliest teachers, Katelyn was an AmeriCorps volunteer. A decade later, she's a full-time classroom teacher with a master's degree in education. *"Every day at OSS there are things to learn, laugh about, and grow with."*

Katelyn enjoys helping students build their social and emotional skills. She knows they're essential to success. *"Students wouldn't learn a thing from me if they thought I didn't care about them."* Her students do know she cares.

Connections remain long after graduation. *"These are real relationships and I work hard to maintain them."* Katelyn only wishes that everyone learned social and emotional skills in middle school. *"The world would be a much nicer, kinder, loving place if everyone attended OSS!"*



TOBEY EUGENIO

Creativity Director, Arts & STEAM instructor

It's no coincidence that OSS has blossomed creatively since Tobey's arrival in 2015. She established our Outdoor Classroom, STEAM Lab, Student Council, Genius Flex Block, and more. *"My art is designing spaces and learning experiences that let young people create, innovate, and bring their natural human curiosity to fruition."*

Tobey subscribes to a "connected and challenging" teaching style. *"Students know I have high expectations, and they know*

I love them! That's what good teaching is about, it's what we all aspire to." It works - Tobey is still in touch with most of the students she's taught here. *"It's important that students know how to tap into their own genius and understand that mistakes are where the learning is. We teach that. At OSS, we celebrate being 'flawsome!'"*



ANGIE FENTON P'11, '17

Trustee

When it comes to OSS, Angie has pretty much done it all. She was our first salaried teacher in the early days and helped us design the original curriculum. More recently, she joined our Board of Trustees. You can really hear Angie's passion when she talks about being an OSS parent.

Her daughter Jaianne '11 was in our first graduating class, and Marlowe '17 followed in her footsteps. Angie says, *"To me, OSS wasn't just about academics, it was also about nurturing and teaching my girls about themselves in their entirety. OSS helped me develop morally sound individuals."* Angie adds that the connection continues long after students graduate. *"The doors never close, OSS is a lifelong partnership. What happens here lasts for an entire lifetime."*

"The doors never close, OSS is a lifelong partnership."



KIM FRANCIS

Trustee, Volunteer/Co-Coach, FIRST LEGO League

Kim began volunteering at OSS before it even opened. She helped plan the School's curriculum in her area of science and technology. *"I got involved because of my own experience - I didn't enjoy school! I wanted to help create a place where students felt good about themselves and what they were doing."*

In the years since, Kim has found several other ways to achieve that goal. Recently, she's been coaching for the FIRST LEGO League Challenge - a global robotics competition in which OSS teams have excelled. Kim sees competition as a learning opportunity where both success and failure are useful. *"We teach students how to get back up and try again. That's what makes OSS different. The girls here are coached at LIFE."*

"We teach students how to get back up and try again."



Olimpia Andrade '16
New Bedford High School Academy of Honors '20
Spelman College '24



We Are OSS

“Vision” isn’t something we see; it’s something we believe.
It urges us forward, usually without a map and often through thick fog.
But when we pause and look back, we can see how far we’ve come.

With pride and awe and gratitude
For the people and passion that lifted us
The sweat and struggle that propelled us
And the students who inspire us.
They bring our vision to life. They make our dreams come true
As they so capably, relentlessly, and joyously pursue their own.



SOLANGE LIMA-SOARES '17

Bishop Stang School '21,
Bristol Community College '23

Solange is studying liberal arts and psychology in the Commonwealth Honors Program at BCC, and plans to transfer to Boston University next year. She also works as a behavioral technician, helping improve quality of life for children with autism. As if that's not enough, she's also a teaching apprentice at OSS! *"I'm everywhere,"* she laughs.

Solange loves working at OSS and helping out wherever she's needed. She connects well with students, having been a Sister Sailor herself. *"I love seeing the girls' faces when they achieve something they thought they couldn't. That's so familiar to me."* Solange says she didn't feel "smart" when she first got to OSS, but that soon changed. *"The progression of my confidence and academics here was astronomical. I learned to love learning."*



ALEJANDRA MENDEZ '18

Noble & Greenough School '22,
Yale University '26

"At the end of my OSS admissions interview, Ms. Herman asked what my favorite color was, and said, 'it'd better be blue!' I didn't get the joke - it's an OSS school color. I thought I didn't get in!" Alejandra, who entered Yale University this fall, isn't often caught short. *"Academics have always been important to me. Education is a route out of poverty, a way to advance yourself."*

Her time at OSS sparked Alejandra's love of computer science, which she'll study in college. She also appreciates the "life tools" she gained at OSS, the knowledge and techniques that are helping her to clear her path and make her way. *"It's a mindset **and** a skillset - something I'm always aware of and try to live by."*



DALYMAR RUIZ-KING '12

Greater New Bedford Voc-Tech High School '16,
Curry College '20, Bridgewater State University '24

Daly says when she was little, all her friends were boys. That's why she was intrigued when her mom suggested an all-girls' school. *"Any new experience was fun for me. I was open to anything!"* That hasn't changed. A summer job at a camp for at-risk youth sparked Daly's passion for working with kids. She is now a therapeutic mentor for children and teens at the Justice Resource Institute. She's also pursuing a master's degree in social work.

Daly is always translating and combining what she's learning now with what she learned at OSS. *"You've got to advocate for yourself and have open communications regarding your needs,"* she explains, quickly adding, *"and have an adventurous spirit!"* That's vintage Daly and the mark of an OSS student!



ISADORA SYLVIA-RIBEIRO '18 New Bedford High School Academy of Honors '22, Northeastern University '26

Isadora's love of acting led her to join the drama club in high school. Eager to give back to OSS, she returned as a volunteer last spring to lead our new drama club. Now studying environmental justice at Northeastern, she's focused on her future. *"I don't think I can change the world with my acting. And I really want to do something impactful."*

Lessons that Isadora learned at OSS, such as *"letting go of the familiar,"* have helped shape and strengthen her. She says she still carries those Core Value tools with her today. *"My love of learning stems from my time at OSS - it opened a part of me. Now I want more for myself. I know we're all more than the identity we give ourselves from the start."*





SARAH HERMAN

Head of School

Our 15th year coincides with Sarah's 10th. Her job hasn't become any easier with time - not in *these times!* But easier is not Sarah's thing anyway; *better* is. "*Every challenge strengthens us,*" she says, modeling the Community Core values she brought to OSS. "*Each year we get more organized, intentional, and skillful. Our curriculum gets more layered, more meaningful; our programming expands; our campus improves.*"

Sarah credits this to the School's commitment to never stop learning. "*The past few years taught us that civic life is even more complex than we may have realized. But there's no place better than OSS to work through challenges, be inspired by courage and resilience, and supported and surrounded by people who find joy in making a difference.*"

***“EVERY
CHALLENGE
STRENGTHENS
US.”***

A powerful, productive, and supportive space for girls is more important today than ever. We couldn't do this work without YOU as OSS is tuition-free and ineligible for state funding. THANK YOU for helping us build an extraordinary school to educate our students and strengthen our community.



OUR SISTERS' SCHOOL

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*Photography by K&A Photography, Kate Parker,
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