

March 15, 2007

Dear High School Parents and Guardians,

This newsletter will highlight activities and programs that our students have been involved in over the past few months. It also allows me the opportunity to recognize our students for some of their outstanding achievements and awards.

Student Recognition

This year, the Portland Stage Company (PSC) is presenting the first annual Little Festival of the Unexpected Young Writers Project. This week-long event will feature short plays and monologues written by high school students. Their scripts will be read by actors, directors, and playwrights associated with the PSC. A number of scripts that show creativity, originality, and theatricality will be chosen for a public reading. The students will be invited to attend the rehearsals of the reading of their script and meet professional playwrights who are in residence. Two Old Orchard Beach High School juniors have submitted their own original works for the competition:

Erin Sullivan has entered her monologue: Stuck In A Tree: The Slightly Overdramatic Musings of a Jaded Twelve-Year Old Boy

Brittany Johnson has submitted her one act play: Veggies In A Blender

Portland Stage Company will announce the winners in early April. Good luck to Erin and Brittany!

I would like to recognize **Brittany Johnson** for another outstanding achievement. After a highly selective competition, Brittney was selected to attend The New England Young Writers Conference to be held at Middlebury College's Bread Loaf Mountain campus in May. The conference offers a balance of "formal" and "informal" writing events. This is the third time Old Orchard Beach has been represented at the conference, the first student since 1993. Congratulations to Brittany.

Also congratulations to the cast and crew of the Drama Club for their incredible performance at the Regional One Act Festival. Old Orchard Beach High School was the Class B Runners-up for the region. Three of the school's cast members were selected for the All-Festival Cast: **Katie Pease**, **Erin Sullivan**, and **Heather Tatsak**. The sound crew members **Zach Knapp**, **Nicole Worden**, and **Randi Gribbin** received a special commendation as well.

The faculty and administration selected the following three seniors for state and conference recognition. **Ashley Hibbard** will be awarded the MPA Outstanding Senior Award in April. This award recognizes one outstanding senior from every high school in Maine based on high academic performance, school citizenship and contributions to the school. **Carly Wittman** and **Jeffrey Sun** will receive similar awards as outstanding seniors from the Western Maine Conference. Two seniors from each of the nineteen high schools in the conference will be recognized for their achievements at a dinner in early May.

Instilling Student Success

The high school will be taking part in the Making It Count Program as part of the school's initiative to encourage students to look beyond their high school years early on in their high school experience. This program will offer three opportunities for our students to listen to guest speakers who will address our freshman, junior and senior classes in three different presentations. Attached with this report is information about the three programs. We will start with "Making Your College Search Count" for all juniors, "Making College & Career Count" for seniors this spring, and "Making High School Count" for all freshmen scheduled for the first day of school next fall.

Once again, ALL juniors in the state of Maine will be required to take the SAT's. This year the testing will be held on Saturday, May 5 from 8:00 AM to 1:00 PM. In lieu of juniors attending school on that Saturday, they will have no school on the following Friday, May 11. Students must be in attendance on the 5th in order to have that Friday off.

Mr. Craig Pendergrass, Physics and Chemistry teacher at the high school, will be offering an SAT Preparation Program beginning with the first session on March 26. This will be the first of two sessions open to all juniors and seniors. This after school offering will be at no cost to students. This will be the second year that we have offered this optional program for our students. Included with this letter is more information about the program.

Southern Maine Community College & University of Maine in Orono Visits

On Thursday, March 22, all sophomores and their advisors will be going to SMCC's "Careers of the 21st Century" program in South Portland. This will be our third year attending this day. We have received positive feedback from staff and students who attended this workshop in the past. It gives our students another opportunity to visit a college campus so that they can learn about potential college programs and careers to explore for their future.

On May 2, all juniors and their advisors will be heading up to Orono to visit the UMaine campus. The students will have the opportunity to learn more about the programs offered there. Students will be bussed to and from the high school on that day. Further information about the visit will be mailed to parents next month.

UNE/ OOBHS Partnership

The high school has initiated a partnership with the University of New England's teacher education and certification program. We currently have one student teacher from the university working with Mr. Angelosante and Ms. Slack in our social studies department. This will hopefully be the first of many opportunities for Old Orchard Beach High School to help serve student teachers at UNE. Two advisors from UNE's Student Teacher Program met earlier this winter with the high school's department coordinators to discuss to possibility of utilizing our high school programs and staff to help train their student teachers. Students in their first year of studies in the education program will also be given the opportunity to make classroom visitations at the high school as part of their course requirements. Ms. Cassie North, an Old Orchard Beach High School graduate, Class of 2005 and a current student in the UNE program, has been one of our classroom observers this month.

There are many benefits to this partnership for our students and staff as well. UNE will become an ongoing resource to teachers in the areas of educational research and instructional practices. Also through this partnership, our students will have access to the University's programs. At this time, three of our seniors were able to get a taste of what a college classroom is like. They were invited to attend an education class taught by Dr. Dan Rothermel at the University last month. The students actually participated in the class and stated that it was a great experience for them. A fourth student hopes to visit classes in the science department this month before making a college choice. Hopefully this is a start to a great opportunity for many of our students in the future.

Carla Barron, a special education teacher at the high school, was also invited to UNE to speak to an undergraduate education class about instructional practices and programs for students with learning disabilities. The education department at UNE plans to invite other members of our faculty to speak with their first-year students.

8th Grade Transition Night

The high school will be hosting a meeting for all parents of current eighth graders on Tuesday, April 3. Parents will learn about the courses offered at the high school and have an opportunity to meet teachers, guidance counselors and school administrators. Parents and guardians will also receive an 8th Grade transition booklet explaining many of the high school policies and requirements. A letter explaining the night in more detail will be sent home early next week to parents.

Respectfully submitted,

Rick DiFusco, Principal