Summer/Fall 2025

Oregon Episcopal School

OES Magazine

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Oregon Episcopal School

On the Cover: *We have launched a refreshed brand identity with a new OES logo as we embark on our five-year Strategic Plan. Read about the meaning behind each of the brand elements on pages 26-27.*

Founded in 1869. Located in Portland, Oregon, between the Cascade Mountains and the Pacific Ocean, our Pre-K–12 day and boarding programs give future global leaders the skills and confidence to succeed in college—and in life.

OES MAGAZINE

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The Meaning of Excellence

Oregon Episcopal School recently launched a bold and comprehensive strategic plan—**OES 2030: Leading with Purpose**—that charts our course for the future. This plan is both purpose-driven and mission-aligned, anchored in our deepest values and aspirations as a school community.

At a time when the world presents significant and complex challenges, the OES **MISSION** offers clarity and direction: *educating students to realize their power for good as engaged citizens of the world.*

This enduring mission gives rise to our **VISION:** *In a dynamic, joyful community of scholars, OES ignites a passion for lifelong learning and empowers students to become the architects of their own education. Our students navigate complexity, collaborate in partnership, and lead with purpose as the innovative, compassionate, and ethical citizens the world so urgently needs.*

Our **STRATEGIC PLAN** builds on this foundation. With **Excellence, Character, and Community** as its guiding pathways, the plan invites us to build a *Beloved Community*—one that honors each individual's unique gifts, upholds dignity and justice, and forges deep, meaningful connections across difference. It is a compass pointing us forward with intention and purpose.

As you explore this issue of *OES Magazine*, you'll see how the life of the School reflects this vision in action. From the hallmark science inquiry projects of our Upper School students, to the performing arts woven throughout every division; from the distinctiveness of our signature boarding program to the recent achievements of our spring athletic teams; from the inspiration of our alums to the legacies of our retiring colleagues—the OES commitment to excellence, character, and community shines through.

Importantly, our understanding of **excellence** continues to evolve. Traditionally linked with academic achievement and individual striving, excellence at OES embraces a more holistic view. In alignment with the World Economic Forum's Education 4.0 framework, we reflect a broader set of skills: global citizenship, creativity, ethical leadership, innovation, and collaborative, problem-based learning. Rigor and knowledge remain essential—and so too does our commitment to cultivating compassionate leaders who collaborate in partnership, navigate complexity, and lead with purpose.

This vision of excellence is not new. In fact, it is ancient. The Greek concept of *arete*—as understood by Aristotle—captures the idea of human flourishing: the pursuit of intellectual, moral, and spiritual growth, and the journey to become fully oneself. At OES, we believe that excellence is the realization of potential, lived in harmony with others and in service of the common good.

In all that we do, **excellence, character, and community** come together in pursuit of *arete*. Our strategic plan calls us to nurture students who flourish by realizing their power for good. We invite you to walk with us on this journey, to partner in our purpose, and to help bring this vision to life.

Gratefully,

The Rev. Michael Spencer, Head of School

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OES MISSION

Oregon Episcopal School educates students to realize their **power for good** as engaged citizens of the world.

Oregon Episcopal School



STUDENT SELECTED FOR MUSICAL SCHOLARSHIP

Jacob Peizner '26 is the winner of this year's Robert H. Bryant Music Scholarship. The scholarship was established in honor of Fr. Robert Bryant, who served as the rector at St. John's Episcopal Parish for 20 years. The scholarship is awarded annually to a high school junior who is an active member of St. John's or a student at Oregon Episcopal School who will use the funds to support future learning in vocal or instrumental music.

Peizner said, "I am so thrilled to have won the Robert H. Bryant Scholarship from St. John's! I have felt a deep connection to music since I was extremely young, and try to shape stories and emotions when I play. Being a winner of this scholarship will not only help me further my passion for music, but more importantly, will enable me to share it even more with others. Playing at St. John's has been an amazing experience, and I always look forward to the times when I play there, feeling their love and connection. I look forward to bringing even more music and 'OES connection' to St. John's in the future!"

"AMERICANS WHO TELL THE TRUTH" MAKES IMPACT ON OES COMMUNITY

OES displayed a selection of 20 portraits in May from the internationally touring exhibit "Americans Who Tell the Truth," painted by artist and activist Robert Shetterly. The exhibit aims to harness the power of teaching social justice through the arts and helping students learn to become courageous, engaged citizens.

Shetterly visited campus during the run of the exhibit and spoke with classes in all three divisions of the school, joined an Upper School Chapel, and led activities, including making justice-focused art with Upper School students and a self-portrait painting class with staff members. He also spoke at an evening Dreaming Justice event in the OES Chapel that was open to the public.

Students, faculty, and staff were so inspired by Shetterly and his work that many of them decided to make their own self-portraits with inspirational messages.



OES CLAIMS SECOND OSAA CUP, CELEBRATING STATEWIDE EXCELLENCE IN ACADEMICS, ARTS, AND ATHLETICS

For just the second time in school history, OES was honored as the 3A winner of the Oregon School Activities Association (OSAA) Cup. Instituted in 1999, the OSAA Cup recognizes overall excellence by schools in academics, activities, and athletics. The award honors a school's students, teachers, coaches, and the entire school community. This is OES's first OSAA Cup win since 2018-19.

Schools earn points based on their participation and finishes in OSAA state championships, and for top 10 finishes in the academic all-state program. A sportsmanship component, whereby schools are awarded points each season for having no ejections, is included as well. In the end, OES won the award with 2642.5 points. The OSAA will present the school with a commemorative trophy during the 2025-26 school year.



FIFTH GRADERS ENGAGE WITH COMMUNITY AT WOODBURN FAMILY LEARNING CENTER

Fifth-grade students planned a learning festival in May at the Woodburn Family Learning Center. The students had been learning about connecting their experiences to those of others, and decided they wanted to focus on math, literacy, cooperation, and sharing in developing activities for the festival. They identified important phrases in Spanish they would need to be successful at their stations, such as "That's great" or "You did it!" and practiced saying them in Spanish to increase their comfort level.

The day's activities included a color identification game where kids practiced saying colors in both English and Spanish and earned homemade star stickers as prizes; art projects like finger painting and flower making; and playful games such as an obstacle course and egg race.

"The festival was so joyful! Both the preschoolers and the fifth graders were learners on so many levels. The fifth graders were pushed to step out of their comfort zones both in terms of leading activities with young students and practicing their Spanish. They demonstrated flexibility, creativity, and boldness in approaching new experiences with optimism and perseverance," said Kristen Haferbecker, all-school community engagement coordinator.

DO IT SCARED: HOW WRITING POETRY BECAME DON-PHARINHO CUFFY'S COMING-OF-AGE

"I may hang around with monsters, but she kills them though ...Then rides into the sunset with her Romeo. And I won't lie—emotional and spiritual health have physical ties ..."

So begins the poem, "Monsters and Mirrors," written by Don-Pharinho Cuffy '25 after an OES theater performance.

"I wrote that poem on a napkin when we were out at Shari's after 'She Kills Monsters,'" Cuffy said. "Going to Shari's (RIP!) was a tradition for us in the theater program. I wrote it and then passed that poem around—people loved it."

Cuffy started writing poetry around 2020, as a way to work out his thoughts and emotions about everything from having a bad day to understanding the nuances of relationship dynamics. "Most of my poems are really verses; I rap them," he said. "Some of them are verses from songs, so you can attack them with a rhythm."

continued



He was inspired to think about his writing differently after taking a particular OES course.

"I took three English courses my senior year, including one taught by my instructor Asha Appel called 'Coming of Age.' It is about our transition into adulthood, becoming our own selves," Cuffy said. He was particularly moved to write a poem titled "Catcher," about *The Catcher in the Rye* character, Holden Caulfield, that became foundational for crafting his own coming-of-age essay.

"I thought, no one will ever truly understand why I put the words that I write on paper that way. The analysis will never be a hundred percent. That goes for every creative art out there. So I thought, why not give space for people to connect with it in that way? I love having a reciprocal relationship where the reader meets the writer through the text," said Cuffy.

"In *The Catcher in The Rye*, the protagonist's former teacher tells him that reading is a 'beautiful reciprocal arrangement' through which the author and the reader both learn something. As a student, Don-Pharinho embraced this concept, writing analytically by first inhabiting the perspective of the main character, examining both voice and the emotional experience. In doing so, he discovered that, as J.D. Salinger wrote, he is not alone in his feelings and that understanding literature is not done in isolation. And in that way, he really defined why the study of books matters," said Appel.

"I thought, no one will ever truly understand why I put the words that I write on paper that way. The analysis will never be a hundred percent."

Knowing that he had compiled many of his poems, Cuffy's mother encouraged him to publish his work and suggested they reach out to Inside & Insight Publishing, located in St. Kitts. The book was released this spring and is available on Amazon.

"I was just putting my ideas and myself out there. And now I feel like this book is coming full circle, putting everything into one place," Cuffy said.

He will start at Reed College in the fall and plans to keep writing.

Monsters and Mirrors

by Don-Pharinho Cuffy

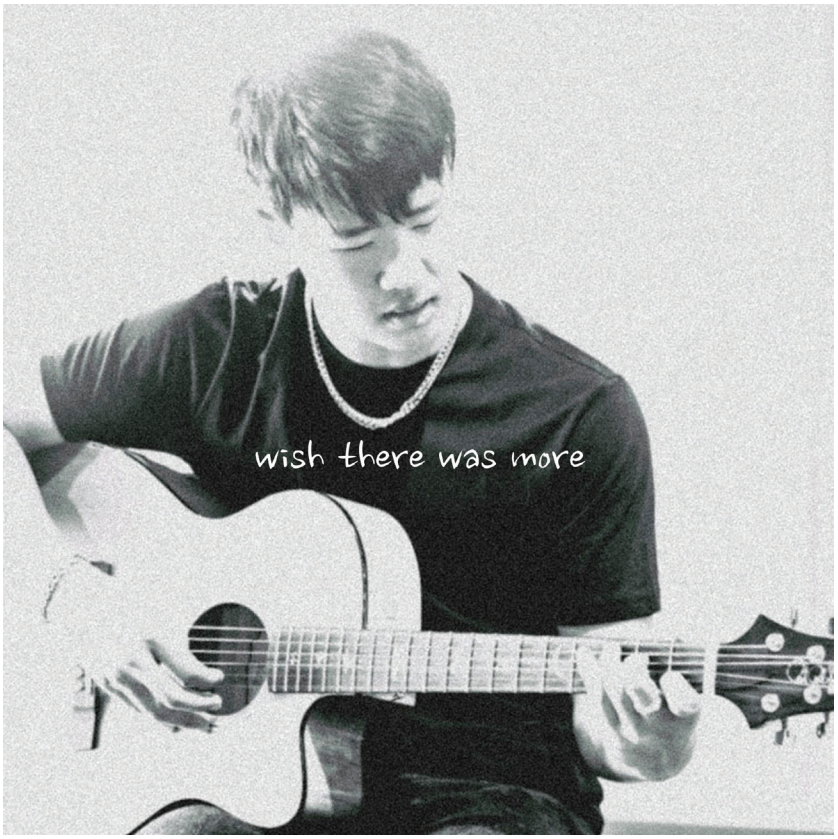
I may hang around with monsters, but she kills them though,
Then rides into the sunset with her Romeo.
And I won't lie—
Emotional and spiritual health have physical ties.
So next time you lie down with a soulmate,
Feel the energy that words can't quite articulate.
A quiet bond where your heart resonates,
And the depth of it all a burden.

But burdens breed lessons, even when disguised—
Like chasing validation through the world's empty eyes.
They'll praise your wins but forget your name,
Or the other way around, it's all the same,
While you build castles from the ashes of blame.

I see the cracks in perfection's glass,
Yet still, I stand first and fall last.
They call it confidence, I call it fact—
The weight of knowing that there's no turning back.

Decisions are neither good nor bad,
They just alter your path.
Monsters surround, yeah, I sometimes fear,
But if you are afraid of something, as they say,
"Do it scared."

MASON DO ’26 RELEASES DEBUT EP RECORDED IN EC3 DESIGN CENTER



Just before the 2024-25 school year ended, Mason Do ’26 released his debut EP titled *Wish There Was More*, created entirely by Do himself in the EC3 Design Center’s music studio. Through the Inquiry in Arts elective, which allows students to pursue independent, advanced-level creative projects, Do was able to use time during the school day to write, perform, record, and produce his EP.

“The EC3 studio gave me everything I needed: the soundproofing created a quiet space for vocals, and the room had all the equipment ready to go,” Do said. “The studio’s great speakers and variety of instruments allowed me to experiment and come up with melodies and chord progressions I ended up using in the final recordings. I love having a space like that on campus—you can often find me in EC3 during open blocks or after school working on new songs.”

Do’s music journey began when he first picked up a ukulele at the age of six, moving on to guitar at age eight, eventually starting a family band, and parlaying his experiences into his own projects. Through his experiences, songwriting became Mason’s personal outlet, a safe space to translate feelings that didn’t always fit into conversation, he said.

“I love songwriting because it allows me to express myself—it’s a cathartic release,” Do said. “Emotions I’ve struggled to articulate in conversation often find their way into songs, and through writing, I feel a sense of relief.”

Do has turned that early spark and musical journey into a fully realized debut EP. Each of the four tracks on *Wish There Was More* explores the complex emotions of longing, loss, and uncertainty. “I’ve always turned to music to feel understood,” Do explained. “Whenever I’m going through something, I look for a song that captures what I’m feeling. The artists I listen to have made me feel less alone, and that’s what I hope to give others.”

While Do handled nearly every aspect of the EP’s production himself, he did have some help: his friend Masato Greeney ’26 added his electric guitar work to two tracks, “One-Sided” and “Nothing Ever Feels the Same,” additions Do describes as “amazing.” His music teacher, Tim Sweeney, also guided him through the final mixing and production stages.

For Do, *Wish There Was More* isn’t just a collection of songs—it’s a testament to the community that has supported him every step of the way. He credits his family, friends, teachers, and mentors for the encouragement that kept him moving forward, and he’s already looking ahead to what’s next. “I’m proud of what I’ve created, and I’ve learned so much through the process,” he says. “I’m already working on a new song and can’t wait to get back into the studio.”

Do hopes his music offers others what it’s given him: comfort, connection, and a reminder that no one is alone in what they’re feeling. *Wish There Was More* is available now on Spotify, Apple Music, Amazon Music, and other streaming services.

Keep up with our Varks! Scan to view the Athletics Calendar







SPRING 2025
ATHLETICS HIGHLIGHTS

Girls Lacrosse made it to the final four in the OGLA State Tournament, going 11-6 in the regular season. Ellie Johnson ’25, Ruby Maki ’25, and Ruby Halpin ’27 were named first team all-state, and Jojo Kobos ’26 was named second team all-state. All-league honors went to Ruby Halpin, Ruby Maki, Ellie Johnson and Jojo Kobos, who were first team, and Zoë Olson ’27 and Kendal Kuni ’27 made second team.

Boys Lacrosse also made it to the final four of the OHSLA State Tournament, with a dominant 9-1 regular season, going 15-4 overall. Jack Andres ’26 was awarded USA Lacrosse All American honors, OES’s first All American in lacrosse since 2019. Jack Andres, along with Ellis Halpin ’25, were named first team all state; Aaren Sales ’25 and Cameron Fasold ’27 second team, and Quinn Sullivan ’27 was named honorable mention. All-league first teamers included: Nick Jugo ’26, Roman Dombrow ’27, Quinn Sullivan, Jack Andres, Cameron Fasold, Tallinn Doenecke ’26, Ellis Halpin, and Aaren Sales. Leif Gilster ’27 was named second team all league, and Donovan Fasold ’27, Haris Mirza ’25, and Peter Miltenberger ’25 were named honorable mention.

In a 24-stroke victory, **Boys Golf** were district champions as a team and Mateo Gramstad ’28 was individual district champion, finishing under par in the district tournament. At state, the boys placed third in a competitive field.

Girls Golf finished third in the district and Linda Wu ’27 finished fourth overall and qualified for the state championship.

Girls Tennis took third place in the state tournament after winning the district title. Ella Li ’26 was the district singles champion and the team of Lucy Berglund ’26/Cici Ji ’26 were district doubles runner-up.

Boys Tennis also took third place in the state after taking the district championship. The team of Lucas Olander ’25/Theo Freres ’26 were district doubles champions and took third in state. The team of Mason Do ’26/Ishaan Bhardwaj ’26 was district doubles runner-up and took fourth place in the state tournament.

At the 2025 OSAA State **Track & Field** Championships, Ronan Gantzos ’26 earned second place in both the 1500m and 3000m events and was the district champion in both. Lauren Tittel ’25 placed third in the 1500m and 3000m, while Theo Savage ’26 took second in the 100m. Several school records were broken: Ronan Gantzos in the 1500m and 3000m, Theo Savage in the long jump, Brady Mason ’27 in the 400m, Lauren Tittel in the 1500m, Uma Kucera ’25 in the shot put, and Summer Welsh ’25 in the triple jump—where she also claimed the district championship. The OES 4x100 and 4x400 relay teams also set new records.




















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New Field, Renewed Commitment

The OES Soccer Team is stepping onto the new turf ready to inspire, compete, and build a legacy.

by Mitch Forness, Marketing & Communications Content Manager

On September 3, 2025, the first-ever official soccer match on OES's brand-new field will feature the OES girls as they take on Amity in a rematch of their final playoff game last season. The girls are looking to build on a phenomenal 2024 season, going 10-3-1, only losing to the #1 and #2 ranked teams in the state. They outscored their opponents 71-12 in the regular season and made it to the state quarterfinals, falling to state finalist Central Linn/East Linn Christian 1-0. To top it off, first-year Head Coach Liz Hryciw was named Lewis & Clark League Co-Coach of the Year.

This fall, they will have a new field to build on last year's successes: a newly resurfaced turf field with a bright, state-of-the-art pitch that embodies the school's commitment to student growth on and off the field.

Four-year varsity goalie Abi Green '26 sees the new field as a sign of how much OES values its athletes. "It means a lot that OES cares enough about its sports to keep building new facilities," she says. "We're known as a really academic school, but they care about sports, too. Hopefully, the new seating and covering will bring out more players, parents, and fans. Maybe every game will feel like Homecoming."

The boys soccer team is lined up with the girls to build on a fantastic season that resulted in a state finals appearance. Under first-year Head Coach James Nolan, the boys went 11-2 in the regular season and made it to the state final as the #2 seed in the state. The team lost 1-0 in a hard-fought state finals match.

For Nolan, last season marked a transformative moment for the boys' team. "Last season was excellent overall," Nolan says. "It was a big year of growth for the team. We focused on getting fully accustomed to a new playing style, which is a more possession-oriented system built around maximum width and intelligent movement. The boys bought into it quickly and developed tremendously over the course of the season."

That buy-in paid off with a deep postseason run that ended one match short of a championship. "We were incredibly unfortunate to lose in the final," Nolan reflects. "It was one of those matches where the result didn't reflect the performance or effort. But the experience has only fueled the group's motivation for this year."

One of the biggest catalysts for that motivation? The brand-new field. For Nolan, the impact is clear: "The new turf and seating will be a game-changer for us. Not only will it provide a fantastic, consistent playing surface that suits our style with quick passing, control in tight spaces, and playing through the thirds, but the improved atmosphere with the new seating will elevate the energy around home games. It's a privilege to have a facility like this, and we're excited to make the most of it."

Junior Axel Murray '26, one of the team's captains, echoes Nolan's energy. Last season brought significant changes and lessons that the players are ready to put into action. "Last season was a big change for a lot of the returning players because of the new coaching staff and the new style of play," Axel says. "Everyone's going to be a lot more comfortable this season knowing what the basics are ahead of them."

As one of three captains alongside Ryder Sendecke '26 and Lincoln Weiler '26, Axel is determined to help set the tone. "We're going to make sure everyone works as hard as they can. We feel that having more people there for you and pushing you every day makes you a better player. We know that last season we didn't achieve the ultimate goal, which is winning the state finals, but this season will be different. We want to show our families and friends how hard we've been working by making every game a statement game, showing that we're the best in the league."

For Murray, the new facility is more than just grass and seats; it's an invitation. "It was definitely a much-needed redesign," he says. "I'm most excited for the seating to be revamped because it's more of a big invitation to the fans and supporters to come out and support their Aardvarks. We've been waiting for something like this for a while. The old field and seating were outdated and getting old. With this new project, a different type of energy will be fueled into the players—we're ready to play."





Energy is a word that frequently comes up when talking to OES athletes, and it's just as true on the girls' side. For the girls soccer team, led by Hryciw, last year's strong postseason run was a testament to a culture that prioritizes growth, teamwork, and belonging. "A lot of players are so focused on, 'If I don't make varsity, I can't play,' and that's just not what we're about," Liz says. "Every teammate matters. Every single player plays a key role. That culture of buy-in is what makes this program special."

As her final season approaches, Green is clear about her goals for herself, for her teammates, and for the next generation. "My hope is that we win the whole thing. That's always been the dream, to play in the finals at Liberty, and it would be an unforgettable experience and a great way to wrap up my four years," she says. "But more generally, I just hope we come together, work hard in preseason, and have a strong start. That's always the challenge. Coming in in August, maybe not everyone has played together yet, and you have to get off to a good start. I want us to avoid that rough start and finish strong."

Back on the boys' side, Murray feels the same. Asked what soccer means to him, he's quick to answer: "Soccer is my everything. I like to think of it as an escape from the real world, a way to take a step back from anything worrying or stressful. Even just being inside the OES Athletic Center, being around people who care about sports, it's just a great feeling."

As the Aardvarks prepare to break in their new field and take this season to the next level, it's clear that what happens under the lights in the fall is just the beginning. The real story is the one that happens every day: teammates becoming friends, younger players finding confidence, seniors leaving a legacy, and an entire community rallying around something bigger than the game itself.

"I pinch myself every day I get to coach here," Hryciw says. "This program, this facility, this family, it's all bigger than soccer."

For the entire OES community, the new field is a place to belong, to grow, and to connect across grades, backgrounds, and generations.

"The field has been a big part of my OES experience," Green says. "When I was younger, we did field day on the field, the track is where we did the Run for Fun and the Footies program, so I think that to all the new freshmen coming from other schools, it'll maybe be their first time to play on a super-nice turf field. I think it'll be my first time playing on a fresh new field, maybe ever."

That sense of community and shared experience is at the heart of OES athletics. Abi sees the new turf as a stage for memories that will stick with players and younger students for years to come.

"I just think it's so cool that OES is replacing the field so younger kids can experience that too. I remember being little, watching the Homecoming games under the lights. Now, younger kids will get that same experience, but even better."

When you arrive at OES this fall, whether for the first day of school or for Homecoming on September 26, you will see the updated track and turf on the OES Athletic Field.

Here are some fun facts about the new facilities:

- **This will be one of the first fields in the nation and the first in the PNW to be 100% USDA-certified bio-preferred.**
- **The turf field combines both BrockFILL and AstroTurf's® components, creating a fully biobased turf system recognized by the USDA for its renewable, sustainable materials.**
- **The new, covered bleachers will be equipped with solar panels capable of powering the on-field lights for over 300 hours.**
- **Team shelters will be added for both home and away teams on the far side of the field (opposite the covered bleachers) to offer protection from the elements.**

These upgrades reflect our commitment to sustainability, functionality, and providing the best possible experience for our student-athletes and community.

This project is fully donor funded.



CONGRATULATIONS TO THE

Class of 2025

The 153rd OES Commencement, held on June 14, 2025 at Trinity Episcopal Cathedral, featured musical selections sung by the Upper School Choir and speeches from Head of School The Rev. Michael Spencer and senior speaker Vikram Vallabhanath ’25.

The keynote address to the class of 2025 was given by Priya Bhatt ’05, a data scientist. Her career in biomedical research includes leading the development of the Global Alzheimer’s Association Interactive Network—the largest Alzheimer’s disease data platform of its time—designed to connect leading researchers and institutions around the world to advance our understanding of this devastating illness through shared imaging, genetic, and clinical data. Bhatt is now a consultant with Deloitte, where she serves as a data science and analytics expert for life sciences and healthcare Fortune 500 clients.



Priya Bhatt ’05

“Ask yourself not just, ‘what do I want to do, but who do I want to be?’ Because it’s for you to define,” Bhatt said. “You’re not chasing someone else’s version of success. You’re recognizing your own patterns, using your own voice, finding your own worth in this world. Congratulations, class of 2025. We can’t wait to see what insights you bring to the world.”

Colleges Attending for the Class of 2025

Amherst College
Bates College (2)
Boston College (3)
Boston University (2)
Brandeis University
California Polytechnic State University, San Luis Obispo (2)
Carleton College
Case Western Reserve University
Chapman University (3)
Claremont McKenna College
Colgate University (2)
College for Creative Studies
Colorado College
Davidson College
Denison University
Georgia Institute of Technology
Gonzaga University
Lewis & Clark College
Loyola Marymount University
Mount Holyoke College
New York University
Northeastern University
Oberlin College
Occidental College
Oregon State University (2)
Princeton University
Purdue University (3)
Queen's University
Reed College
Rice University (2)
San Diego State University
San Jose State University
Santa Clara University
Southern Methodist University
St. Olaf College
Stanford University (2)
Swarthmore College
Tufts University (2)
University of California, Davis (2)
University of California, Irvine
University of California, San Diego (2)
University of California, Santa Barbara
University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign
University of Maryland, College Park
University of Rochester
University of St. Andrews
University of Vermont
Wellesley College (2)
Wesleyan University (3)
Whitman College (4)

SENIOR AWARDS AND RECOGNITION

All-School Awards

Alumni Award—Lauren Tittel
Bishop Dagwell Award—Nathan Bender
J. Milne Manson Award—Flynn Davis Lawrence
Mary Rodney Award—Catherine Gewecke
Patron's Award—Mia Robertson
Susan Elizabeth McClave Award—Don-Pharinho Cuffy

Department Awards

Computer Science—Parker McCoog
English—Julia Chen
History and Social Studies—Savannah Burley
Library—Lina Paykar
Mathematics—Tully Ferris Wayne
Religion and Philosophy—Peter Miltenberger
Science—Jiaming Zhang
Visual, Performing, and Musical Arts–Visual—Jia Slovic
Visual, Performing, and Musical Arts–Musical—Flynn Davis Lawrence
Visual, Performing, and Musical Arts–Performing—Ruth Siviglia
World Languages–Spanish—Lauren Tittel
World Languages–French—Nisma Qureshi
World Languages–Chinese—Diego Frias
Marion Horwell Residence Award—Jeff Shao
Student Body Award—Lauren Tittel
Athletics Award–Girls—Ellie Johnson
Athletics Award–Boys—Joe Schwalbach





The Pace of the Year in the OES Boarding Program

by Meredith Primm, Director of Residential and Student Life

Atop the crest of the hill at 6300 SW Nicol Road, a vibrant community of boarding students and dorm parents call the OES campus home. Since opening its doors as St. Helen's Hall in 1869, Oregon Episcopal School has always served as a home for students and residential faculty. It's fair to assume that in the last 150 or so years, program priorities and initiatives have shifted, but the core values of providing a world-class education here in Portland to students from around the world remain steadfast and true to their roots.

It takes courage to say yes to becoming a boarding student—in any capacity—and our program is fortunate to have representatives from several continents as well as the contiguous United States. We ask boarding students to lean in, a lot, in pursuit of a robust and memorable experience at OES. A student builds a great deal of autonomy and independence throughout their time in the dorms, in things like their daily routine, trying a new sport or sampling performing arts, making new friends with whom to share a meal, or even just navigating sharing a bathroom with others for the first time! While there are some non-negotiables, such as attending academic classes and OES-based extracurriculars, students also have the opportunity to explore other passions or enjoy the company of their dorm brothers and sisters.

A common misconception about what it feels like to be a boarding student is that it's just school with your room attached to it, but what makes it memorable is the people who surround you. When asked about his experience this year as a first-time boarding student, Brandon Zhong '27, said, "What I had in mind was just regular school and then being by myself to do whatever. I was really wrong. I had friends to go out with and hang out with instead of being by myself, sports to play with new people, dinner to eat with new people, and especially the nights where I just hung out with the dorm parents."

Over the course of the 10 months students are here during the school year, time ebbs and flows. Slow, quiet weekends build over time, crescendoing and crashing into weeks full of papers, tests, performances, and big games, before backing off again to provide a reprieve from the busy seasons. The arc of the year often follows a similar pattern, although no two years are ever the same between the opening and the closing, and that's just the way we like it!

August is full of excitement as we welcome new students, say hello to returning students, and spend our first weekend together before sending everyone out on trips. September brings hints of fall weather, coupled with weekend activities and plenty of community building as students settle into their schedules. October is always busy, with trips off campus to the pumpkin patch and haunted houses, carving pumpkins, our first long weekend, and plenty of surprises along the way. November is quick,

with conferences and the fall break taking up much of the second half of the month. December—well, we love December a lot! The holiday formal dinner, drive-through light shows, hot cocoa, shopping trips, and weekends with the fireplaces crackling make way for December break. January creeps up on us, providing a long month to spend time doing things indoors, studying for exams, and most importantly, making way for the Dorm Retreat. The retreat is a beloved overnight tradition held during the break between semesters, offering us an opportunity to spend time together off the OES campus to establish community bonds and excitement for the upcoming semester. February is cold but brings out the new sports seasons. March is packed with activity. Winterim and spring break are two opportunities for our students to explore Portland, the United States, or the globe before returning to campus in April for the long haul until the end of the school year. May brings us opportunities to get out and explore as the weather opens up for us: days of sunshine allow students to migrate back outside, spending time under the apple tree playing, studying, or just enjoying the sights and sounds of campus. June brings a lot of joy as we relive the memories of the year; we feel the tugs of change as we say goodbye at our senior farewell dinner and during commencement as we watch our seniors cross the stage. The dorms go from vibrant and crowded, to still and empty in a matter of hours as we close up for the summer, knowing that we'll do it all again in just a couple of months!



Students all experience their journeys differently, and, in doing so, offer our program their unique perspective and experience as they leave their stamp on the dorms. The spirit of the boarding program is held by the students who make it special year after year. What I appreciate about each of our students is that everyone needs something a little different from our program. Maybe a student needs the social aspect because they come from a big family and miss their siblings, while another student enjoys the peace and quiet of finding a secret study spot on campus where they are able to take a deep breath. Some students contribute to the vocal and garrulous crowd, while others step out of their comfort zone to make a new relationship at dinner one night or make an announcement at our community meeting for the first time. Some students arrive convinced they're good at certain things and leave OES with a new skill set in an area they never dreamed they'd be part of.

An element that allows us to see real growth among students is the opportunity for them to take controlled risks, allowing them to discover more about themselves and their peers in the process. For a program like ours, these experiences help to weave together layers of strength that have become part of our foundation. Program leaders have always seen the value of living and exploring the natural world in Oregon, and as early as 1930 when OES purchased Everglade on Lake Oswego to become a recreational center for students, offering boating, swimming, diving, and canoeing. These days, boarding students are able to access all of Oregon through our Experiential Education program: rafting down the Deschutes, rock climbing in Smith Rock State Park, or surfing out at the coast. Trips like these, or even Everglade in the 1930s and '40s, are a unique characteristic of our program and are supported by the school.

As a dorm team, we spend time planning and cultivating events that we hope will instill community spirit and a sense of togetherness among our students throughout the course of the year. They're well received by students and have become traditions to our program: traditions like the Dorm Retreat in January, the Retreat of Fun in June, formal holiday dinners, Wednesday night bingo or trivia, prefect dinners, and dorm family outings. If we're being honest, however, from a dorm parent perspective, my favorite memories are the ones that happen organically. Memories like a game of dominoes that was supposed to last one round, and somehow, it's two hours later and we're on round eight or nine, there's music playing in the background like we're in Monte Carlo, and we had to bust out the snacks because there's no sign we're wrapping up any time soon. Or perhaps it's seeing students show up to support their dorm brothers and sisters at a performance in the Great Hall, or student-led activities that fill a whole mini-bus of excited dormies ready to explore Portland together.

The dorm experience truly is about the people who make it: ever-evolving, ever-changing with new folks who quickly become familiar faces; yet steadfast in its mission, the boarding program is anything but ordinary!



One of the greatest joys of learning is sharing what you have learned with others. OES primary students discovered this when they opened the doors to their own wetlands museum this spring to their parents and classmates.

The primary students learned outside every morning during the school year. Their teacher, Sharon Kottler-Decker, believes in the power of being immersed in nature while learning, and the benefits have been clear, with enhanced academic outcomes and students filled with calm.

As the students observed and learned about the wildlife, plants, and insects on the OES campus, they created. They made paper-mache sculptures of birds and animals.

Sharing the Wonder:

Primary Students Create Their Own Wetlands Museum

by Sharon Sipprell, Marketing Content Writer





They created molds of animal tracks and carried back water from the pond to study in an aquarium. They collected feathers, leaves, sticks, bird nests, and even a log that had been chewed on by beavers.

"We looked at everything we had made, and we asked, 'What should we do with all of this?,'" Kottler-Decker said. "Some students asked if they could take the pieces home. I suggested to them, 'As scientists, we have a responsibility to teach.' The students had been to museums before, and they decided they wanted to make their own museum."

Lower School Science Teacher Tina Akehurst collaborated with the students on their wetlands project, following Oregon science standards, such as constructing an argument supported by evidence of how plants and animals (including humans) can change the environment to meet their needs. This introduced them to the concepts of producers, consumers, and decomposers in the wetlands.

The children decided that for their museum, they would divide their displays into four areas: the beaver, other land animals, the pond, and a section about producers, consumers, and decomposers. From producers like plants that grow seeds, to consumers like birds that eat worms, to decomposers like insects that break down wood, they would explore these themes in more detail.

With just a little direction, the students were off and running. "I gave them the topics for the day, and the kids would go and write in their groups. They would come back and share in a circle and get feedback, and then go write again, without

any prompting from me," Kottler-Decker said. This writing turned into their display copy for their museum, which they enhanced with photos they'd taken on their iPads of animals, scat, plants, and bugs.

Lower School Art Teacher Carole Burton led the children in making a paper-mache model of the wetlands during art class. They painted it and filled it in with moss, sticks, and tiny dolls representing themselves. The students examined insects and created up-close observational drawings, which Burton enlarged on the copy machine. She provided paint so the kids could color their creations in vibrant hues.

"They did every single step. Every decision they made was theirs. It was really neat to see this group of primary kids working together so cooperatively and creatively," said Kottler-Decker.

The children also learned about being museum tour guides. They wrote narratives ahead of time so they would be ready. To help the students feel comfortable, Kottler-Decker suggested that everyone practice describing their exhibits to imaginary guests.

"They did every single step. Every decision they made was theirs. It was really neat to see this group of primary kids working together so cooperatively and creatively."
– Sharon Kottler-Decker

"At one point, I looked around the room, and everyone was having these quiet little conversations, like 'this is the pond.' They took it so seriously. It was amazing," she said.





Before the big day, the students wrote a song about the wetlands and practiced it using percussion instruments they made themselves with Lower School Music Teacher Kristen Haferbecker in the EC3 Design Center. They made simple instruments from cardboard and other materials that would all make the sounds of tap, shake, and scrape. One of the stanzas of their song went:

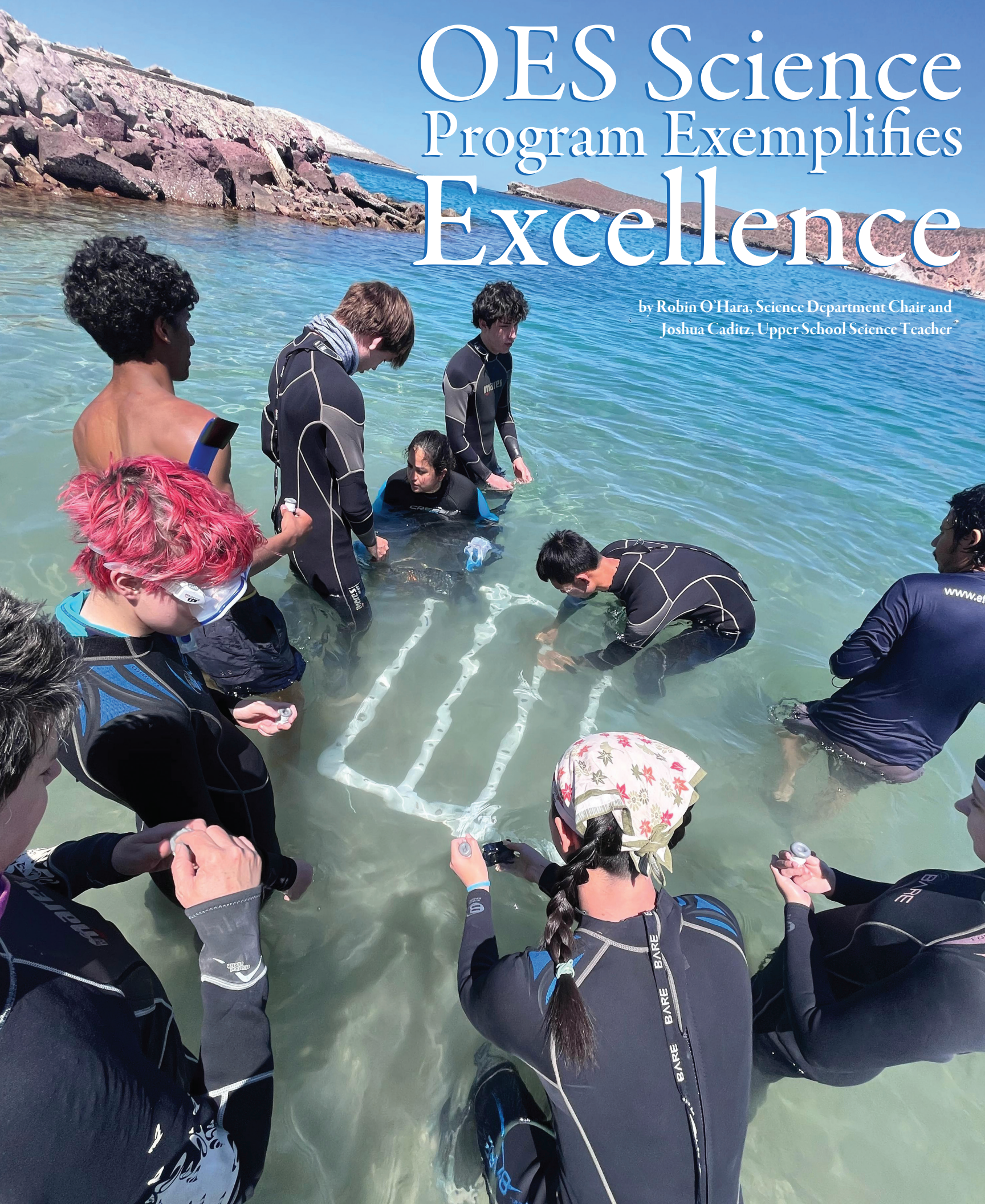
There are aquatic macroinvertebrates in the wetlands
They are insects that can swim.
Water boatman, pond skipper, backswimmers
and nymphs of many kinds
The food chain can't survive without them
They keep the pond in healthy balance
We like the wetlands oh so much.

When their parents and classmates arrived on opening day, the students started their tour in the music room where they performed their song. Then the kids proudly guided their guests through each section of their museum, from the model of the wetlands made of clay, paper-mache, moss, and twigs to the egg shells, bones, and animal tracks. "It took 45 minutes for everyone to make their way through the whole museum," Kottler-Decker said. "Nobody skipped an area. Nobody jumped ahead to the refreshments. They were dedicated," she said.

Kotttler-Decker said this project has been very rewarding. "This is what I love about teaching. We talked at the start of the year about what we're capable of. We're capable of pretty big stuff, right? The students showed that with this project. And they were always asking, 'What more can we do?'"

OES Science Program Exemplifies Excellence

by Robin O'Hara, Science Department Chair and
Joshua Caditz, Upper School Science Teacher



Take a deeper look into the OES science program, which cultivates knowledge and scientific thinking while inspiring curiosity.

The OES science program engages students in the deep scientific practices they need to think critically, solve problems, and interact meaningfully with the world. We aim to provide each student with an opportunity to gain and apply their learning to new contexts, because merely learning facts, without the ability to apply and use them, is not real understanding. As Adam Grant puts forth in his book *Think Again* (2021), "Thinking like a scientist . . . means being actively open minded . . . and revising our views based on what we learn." To this end, excellence in science education means more than mastering content. At OES, this means empowering students to think like scientists, apply their knowledge to real-world challenges, and use science as a force for good. What sets OES apart is a deeply intentional, mission-aligned program rooted in intentional core courses with thoughtful advanced electives led by faculty experts, authentic research experiences with advanced equipment, and a curriculum designed to foster independence, curiosity, and ethical engagement with the world.

Cultivating Knowledge and Scientific Thinking

The core OES science program is a deliberately scaffolded progression that builds deep conceptual understanding of the content while simultaneously fostering curiosity, analytical thinking, creativity, adaptability, and developing each student's science skills. While most people have an understanding of the content covered in a physics, chemistry, or biology class, few ponder the necessary skills that need to be developed to think like a scientist. As Collins et al (1991) found, deep learning is much more than knowledge accumulation; it is learning to think like those in the discipline. As such, our goal is to develop each student's ability to ask questions, develop models, design experiments, analyze data, explain with reasoning, and argue from evidence, all while communicating effectively. To this end, our core sequence of content and labs, from grades 9 through 11, is meant to continuously foster the growth of each student's science skills, with the goal that by the end of our core sequence, students possess both essential content knowledge and the ability to think critically and solve problems scientifically.

Engaging in Real-World Challenges through Advanced Science Electives

OES advanced science electives are not "off-the-shelf" courses borrowed from standard advanced curricula—they are thoughtfully designed, regularly updated, and purposefully built to engage and inspire our students. Each elective grows from the unique expertise of our faculty, who bring their professional research and industry experience directly into the classroom.

For example, students in the science course *Biogeochemistry: From Field to Lab* learn to sample and analyze real soil and water systems using professional-grade instruments, guided by a teacher with experience managing a Stanford environmental lab. Our engineering electives—including *Mechanical Systems Engineering and Process Design Engineering*—leverage the interdisciplinary knowledge of a PhD plant biologist and engineer, offering students hands-on design of aquaponics and hydroponics systems in our greenhouse lab. Courses such as *Global Systems: From Science to Policy* and *Advanced Climate Science* are taught by a former EPA attorney and environmental scientist, helping students link earth systems science with governance and ethical decision-making. Chemistry electives explore place-based themes such as Pacific Northwest foods and art materials, guided by a chemist who also advises local vineyards on wine and soil chemistry.



Analyzing samples in the lab is a key element of the OES science program.

In our advanced physics sequence, a PhD physicist with academic research experience challenges students to master calculus-based modeling and computational analysis of real-world systems. Even our molecular biology electives draw on deep faculty research experience, immersing students in authentic DNA analysis and ecological study. By drawing on this breadth of faculty expertise, our electives empower students to apply their foundational



(From left) Frank Kan '26, Shriya Myneni '25, Eric Min '26, and Elliot Yoo '26 represented OES at ISEF 2025. Frank also received a special award at the conference for his math project from the American Mathematical Society.

science knowledge to complex systems and societal challenges, while cultivating ethical reasoning, creative problem-solving, and a vision for using science as a force for good.

Continually Expanding Opportunities with Advanced Scientific Instrumentation

Thanks to the generosity of donors, our students have access to a growing array of sophisticated scientific tools. Building on a strong foundation of existing resources, our exceptional laboratories continue to provide opportunities for students to engage with advanced, real-world instrumentation. This past year, students made use of our new microplate reader and college-level gas chromatograph, deepening their understanding of molecular biology and chemical analysis. Our greenhouse aquaponics and hydroponics systems, which were designed and built over the previous school year, will continue to grow, thanks to the generosity of an anonymous donor. We will be implementing a sensor suite in the greenhouse that will elevate our aquaponics program into a fully data-driven system, allowing real-time feedback on critical parameters such as pH, dissolved oxygen, ammonia levels, water temperature, and flow rate. This upgrade will reduce labor demands, minimize risk to organisms, and increase yield efficiency. The addition of automation platforms (e.g., Arduino/Raspberry Pi with IoT capabilities) allows students to apply coding and systems thinking in a real-world biological context. In the new school year, we'll be expanding our advanced molecular biology resources with cutting-edge tools for both in-house DNA and RNA sequencing and for precise DNA and RNA quantification. The adoption of this advanced technology will greatly increase the depth and range of student research options well beyond what is typically available to high school students. Students will be able to use environmental DNA (eDNA) to uncover hidden stories in the world around them—from tracking invasive species and native wildlife biodiversity to studying how tiny microbes influence changes in the ecosystem. They'll also be able to explore big questions in genetics—like identifying mutations, understanding inheritance, and uncovering how DNA shapes health, medicine, and the diversity of life. These tools will not only enhance Science Inquiry Project (SIP) opportunities but also enrich our biology coursework and expand possibilities in advanced elective classes.

Research and Real-World Engagement

Our courses include the core practices of science by emphasizing continuous questioning, evidence gathering, and analysis, while providing robust research opportunities and multiple pathways for students to pursue advanced, interest-driven investigations. In each core course, students engage in an individual science inquiry project (SIP), where they implement their science skills, exploring a question within the core discipline and then communicating their process during Science Night. Should students want to engage more deeply in science research, there are a number of pathways to achieve advanced research opportunities. Students can join the varsity science activity, where they have a chance to meet once a week with one of several science teachers during the allotted activity time. Additionally, students can sign up for the Advanced Science Research elective, which is designed to give students access to the research space and a teacher mentor to help guide them through their own research process. Finally, students can do independent research, where they complete the work outside of class, but can use the faculty as resources, to both discuss their research and to help them find mentors outside of the school's program.

Throughout our science program, we are deeply committed to the school's mission of using our power for good by helping students connect their scientific learning to real-world challenges and meaningful work in the community. Whether visiting a local elementary school to teach hands-on science lessons through our Science

Outreach for Inquiry Learning (SOIL) program or working in local research labs to contribute to advancements in medical treatments, our students experience the impact of science beyond the classroom. These opportunities cultivate capable, engaged citizens who think critically, like scientists, and make thoughtful, positive decisions in the world. Students also participate in nationally recognized programs, such as the Aerospace Team, and interact with practicing scientists through our Science Speaker Series. Additionally, they apply their skills to authentic global contexts during Winterim experiences, including exploring geothermal energy in Iceland and conducting marine field studies in Mexico. Through these experiences, our students experience science in action and learn how to use their knowledge to make a difference.

Practicing Evidence-Based Teaching for Deeper Learning

Finally, our faculty put student learning and best practices at the forefront of their work. Our faculty engage in continuous improvement in their teaching and base their work on evidence-based best practices to not just teach facts, but ensure that students have healthy skepticism about their own work and thinking. Throughout our science curriculum, we continually ask students to make their thinking visible, asking them to articulate their work, not just answer review questions. We encourage students to practice thinking routines and critically evaluate data and ideas, knowing that good scientists are aware of the limits of what they know and continue to be curious about what they don't know. We debate ethical issues embedded in many science fields, weighing constraints and trade-offs of decisions.

Excellence in science at OES takes many forms, meeting students' diverse interests and preparing them to thrive both in and beyond the classroom.



The OES greenhouse offers an environment where students can build and test hydroponics and aquaponics systems.



Students learn from practicing scientists in the Science Speaker Series, including Shazib Viljee, PhD, MBA, associate professor of engineering at the University of Portland.

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Creative Arts

All students at OES, youngest to oldest, engage in art, music, and perfo

The creative arts run through OES like an electric current. Visual, musical, and theatrical compositions and performances light up the school, from pre-K students lifting their voices in song to 12th graders writing and performing their own plays.

This energy is ignited in Lower School. The Beginning Years art studio is modeled after the Reggio Emilia *atelier*, where students engage in making meaning of their world through the use of art materials and methods. First through fifth graders head up the hill to the art studio in Bishop Dagwell Hall to work with Lower School Art Teacher Laura Foster, learning traditional and contemporary art techniques such as painting, drawing, and sculpture in both individual and collaborative modes. They use their studio time to create art for homeroom classes and projects.

The Lower School introduces students to the world of music by teaching the basic elements. "The goal is to familiarize students with the language of music, with the vocabulary, unpacking essential notation and sight reading skills, and identifying structures, themes, and storytelling through the artistic language of music. Students dig into its communication capacity while at the same time developing an appreciation for its formal artistic qualities," said Cameron Jack, director of the Visual, Performing, and Musical Arts Department.



Lower School students both sing and play instruments. Students in the Primary class design and build percussion instruments in collaboration with the EC3 Design Center as a part of their music special. This past year, Lower School Strings, an extension class, was invited to participate in the inaugural PNW Orchestra Festival at Jesuit High School. "These festivals are usually geared toward middle and high school students," said Angelika Furtwangler, Lower School Strings Extension teacher. "With our students in grades 1-5, we were the youngest orchestra there."

Students take to the stage at an early age as well. A key project in the second grade is the Changemakers unit. The students study historical and current changemakers from both their local and global community. They identify character traits that describe a changemaker, such as brave, creative, or confident, and identify a specific trait they want to grow within themselves. They create unique skits in small groups to demonstrate their chosen trait as well as inspire others, performed for parents at the end of the unit. And they also take action for change. This past spring, the second-grade class created projects to support organizations like the Oregon Humane Society and Schoolhouse Supplies. In this way, the students become changemakers themselves.



A capstone project in the fifth grade is the student play. This past year, after reading the novel *A Wish in the Dark* by Christina Soontornvat, the students performed an adaptation of the novel for family and friends in the Great Hall. Performing Arts Teacher Pete Buonincontro said, "I am an ardent believer in the power of student voice, and these kids put a lot of thinking, talent, and time into devising a production that was a full main-stage show. Fifth



Flourish at Every Level of OES

rming arts and are encouraged to follow their passion.

by Sharon Sipprell, Marketing Content Writer

graders stage-managed it, ran lights and sound cues, made and managed props and backgrounds, and acted their hearts out."

In Middle School, students begin delving deeper into the visual, performing, and musical arts. Sixth-grade students take one semester of visual art and one semester of theater class, swapping mid-year; students also sample both choir and band to develop an understanding of the program and where their interest lies. Students are then given the opportunity to choose whether they want to focus on theater or art starting in seventh grade, and continue their music, either vocal or instrumental, through choir or band. String players can choose to join the Advanced Strings Ensemble, a combined Upper and Middle School group that meets weekly before school.

Full-fledged stage productions are a part of seventh and eighth grade performing arts curriculum. Middle School Theater Teacher Lauren Cuellar introduces students to not just acting, but also the technical aspects of theater, from costumes, make-up, and props to lighting, sound, and stage design. "I want to give students a spectrum of options that they can choose from to tell a story," said Cuellar. She appreciates the students' energy and enthusiasm, recalling one student saying to another after a performance, "I didn't even know that line was funny! This is awesome!"

Cuellar added, "I think a lot of the things that I teach are transferable to many other classes. I've noticed an uptick in confidence, in being able to speak in front of an audience, and having that confidence level as they move forward has been a positive experience for the kids."



Visual art classes give students the chance to express themselves creatively in many mediums. Middle School Art Teacher Simon Crane introduced a new activity this year, making bobbleheads of imaginary beings that are given features to make them less frightening. "I don't like vampires. So I made the vampire less scary by making him sit on top of a grapefruit," said Ravi Deshmukh '31. Students continue their exploration of traditional and contemporary techniques, powered by an exploration of identity and a growing understanding of self.



In Upper School, students polish their vocal and instrumental skills through the curricular courses Symphonic Band and Choir, and perform in festivals at the state level, including the Oregon All-State Ensemble in Eugene.

Upper School visual art classes are geared toward the acquisition of a more advanced set of art and design techniques, such as 3D prototyping using CAD tools like Adobe and Autodesk software, and the use of the Glowforge laser cutter and 3D printers. Other opportunities include screen printing, drawing and painting, ceramics, and film photography, all geared toward helping students develop their unique creative voice and solve problems using creative modalities. Through programs like Inquiry in Arts, students can pursue their unique creative passion, such as Jia Slovic '25, who elevated her skill for needle felting to the level where she won two national awards. She will continue her artistic pursuits at Tufts University this fall.





The Upper School Performing Arts program stages three major productions per school year. Students can write, act, perform, or work behind the scenes. The term "tractor" was affectionately coined by Upper Schoolers to describe students who are both actors and "techies," people who work behind the scenes on technical aspects of theater. In true OES form, students see themselves as agents of their own learning and are not afraid to be outside the box.

In addition to performances of plays like *Ghostlight* by Stephen Gregg and a disco-inspired interpretation of Shakespeare's *The Tempest,* the student-created Spring Extravaganza gives Upper School performing artists the chance to write and present their own creations. Plays, dance, music, videos, and any combination thereof are welcome.

"We had a senior this past year who got an A in playwriting, but she didn't want to write something really long," said Emily Stone, Upper School Performing Arts faculty member. "So I said, 'Let's develop a three-minute monologue and then we'll find some ninth graders that may want to do some movement to help illustrate the story. So, while you're speaking this juicy, fun, dramatic monologue, you get to help direct and share some of your skills as a senior for these four younger students who are willing to back you up." This performance was enthusiastically received at the Spring Extravaganza.



Students at OES may pursue whichever direction their artistic passion takes them, and as they develop their creative process to complement their plethora of skills, they become well-rounded individuals and adaptive problem-solvers.

"Performing arts is hugely collaborative. It's just a beautiful medium. It allows us to put inquiry skills into practice in real time. The curricular opportunities for this in the Lower School are developing fast and quickly becoming part of capstone projects in a variety of classes. Students can take this foundation and really push it to the next level in the Middle School and Upper School, engaging not only in the many elements of stage performance, but also digital storytelling and audio recording supported by the spaces and faculty in the EC3 Design Center," said Jack.



"Overall, the arts opportunities our students have are pretty phenomenal," he added. "Creativity is and continues to be such a fundamental part of an OES education, not only in the arts and design spaces, but in all of our classrooms. Nurturing creative thinkers is so important as we consider a future filled with novel problems without pre-existing parameters. In the same way that [Head of School] Michael Spencer refers to our strategic plan, I feel that the creative process is a compass that helps guide our thinking rather than a map that defines each step. This is an exciting and critical time for the arts. I'm so grateful to our creative faculty and very proud of the arts program that has become so integrated throughout the school."

Middle Schoolers Take on a Vertical Adventure









This spring, a group of Middle School students went on a rock climbing trip to Smith Rock, organized by Tom Handel, director of experiential education. Upper School students traditionally go on this particular trip, but for the first time, a Middle School group went as well.

Handel shared, "This was an amazing trip for a first-time weekend outing for Middle School. The students worked well together in camp and during the climbing activity to maximize their experience. Students throughout this trip were active and engaged participants and each one of them demonstrated a keen understanding of how to camp and recreate in such a special location without leaving a footprint."

"For many it was a first-time climbing experience and for others it was an opportunity to help others because they were comfortable in that vertical rock environment," he added.

Ben Allderdice '30 said, "This was the first time I had ever gone rock climbing outdoors and it ended up being one of the best camping experiences ever! Not only were there breathtaking views, but the climbing was great exercise and I got to spend quality time with my friends and share a great experience with them. Shoutout to Tom Handel and his crew for making this possible."

Bold Future. New Look.

A FRESH LOOK FOR OES

Oregon Episcopal School

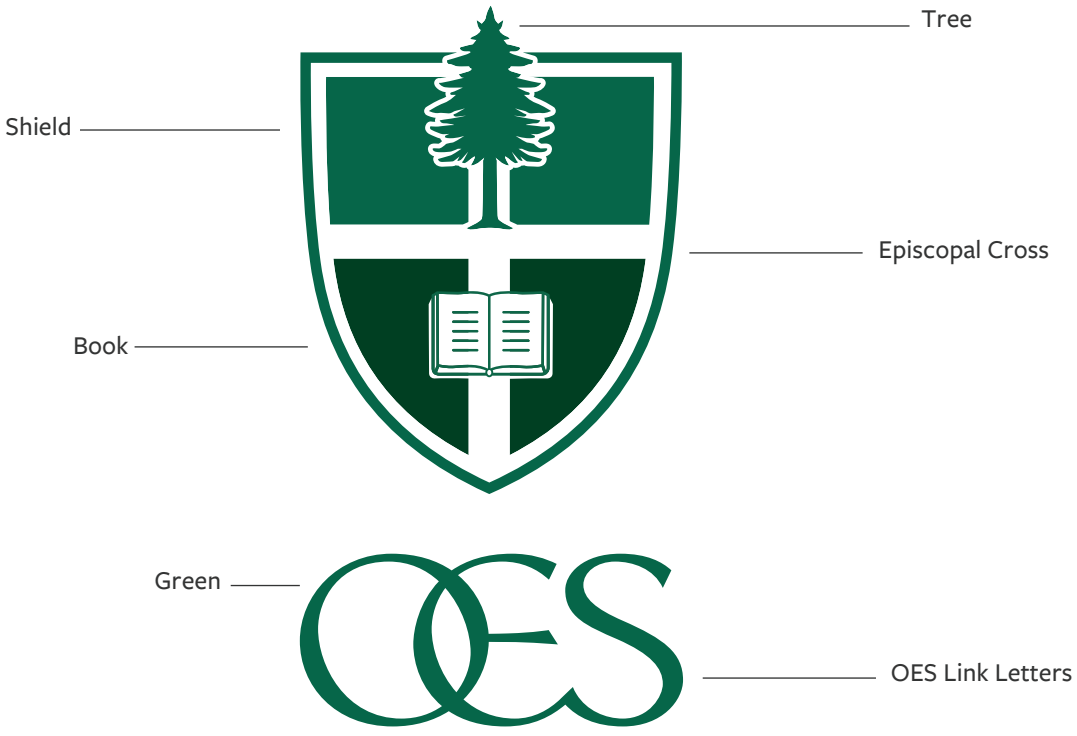
As we launch our five-year Strategic Plan—rooted in Excellence, Character, and Community—we're also proud to share an evolved brand identity for OES. This new look is recognizable, timeless, and deeply rooted in the story of OES. Designed to reflect the strength and purpose of the school, it will carry us confidently into the future.

Same Purpose.

OUR LOGO, OUR STORY

Each element of the new OES logo reflects a core part of who we are. Together, they express the values at the heart of our school and the spirit of our beloved OES community.

- **Shield:** Stability and protection
- **Tree:** Strength, resilience, and Oregon roots
- **Cross:** Episcopal tradition, inclusion, and exploration
- **Book:** Academic excellence and inquiry-based learning
- **OES Link Letters:** Foundational brand element
- **Green:** Legacy and growth



Why Brand Identity Matters

A strong brand helps us tell our story with clarity and consistency—deepening connection, strengthening recognition, and building lasting equity for the years ahead.

Here we honor the employees who moved on after this past school year, after working at OES for 10 years or more, to retire or follow new pursuits. Thank you all for your service to the school and good luck in your future endeavors.

Farewell, friends!



Susan Gundle

Director of Enrollment Management

22 Years

Susie Gundle, who retired in June, was an OES employee for 22 years, but her relationship with the school began as an OES parent more than 40 years ago. She volunteered in a number of roles before officially being hired by the Development Department as a fundraiser, and she eventually accepted the role of leading the Admissions Department. Enjoy reading about Susie's rich history with OES.

What originally drew you to OES?

Our family's journey with OES began in 1984, when we enrolled our eldest son, Jeff, in Beginning Years. As a former educator, I was deeply intentional about school selection. From the first moment I walked down the Lower School hallway, I felt the warmth, the energy, the magic. Even before talking to teachers, I could tell this place was special.

My husband and I were drawn to the strong academics, but even more so to the values that aligned with our own. From their very first days at OES, our sons learned how to be kind, solve problems, and be responsible citizens. The values we talked about around our dinner table were the same ones they learned at school.

All three of our sons, Jeff '98, Kenny '01, and Michael '10, became lifelong Aardvarks. And now, having four out of five grandkids at OES, I get to see the impact of that same mission playing out across generations. They're learning not only how to excel academically, but how to be thoughtful, engaged human beings.

What was your journey like as a volunteer?

I dove in headfirst. Room parent, field trip chaperone, Country Fair volunteer, auction planner, Annual Fund parent chair. You name it, I probably did it.

At first, I was in the classroom, helping teachers, going on field trips, just wanting to support what my kids were experiencing. But I quickly realized how rich and welcoming the parent community was. I made friends standing in the hallway during drop-off. From there, one opportunity led to another.

One of my most vivid early memories is the very first OES auction. I remember someone asking me in the Beginning Years hallway if I wanted to help. Schools were starting to do auctions, you know, so we thought, "Let's think about that." We didn't have a blueprint to follow. We just had a group of enthusiastic parents and the feeling that this could be something really meaningful for the school. We ended up holding the entire event in a family's home right here in Montclair. It was intimate and full of heart. That spirit of "Let's figure it out together" shaped so much of my early experience. Every single year since then, I've been involved in the auction in one way or another.

Another role I held was helping start what's now the OES Spirit Store. Back then, it was just a few parents with an idea: what if there were a place where students and families could pick up supplies and snacks? We called it the Ant Hill. It was joyful and community-driven.

Later, I helped create what's now called Parent Partnership. At the time, it was called Volunteers' Common Link. It gave parents a direct connection to school leadership and created space for real collaboration. That kind of partnership has always mattered deeply to me, with parents feeling heard and part of something meaningful.

How did you transition from being a parent volunteer to working at OES?

I was at a natural transition point in my life. Two of my kids had graduated, and I was thinking about maybe teaching again. I had worked closely with the Development Office as a volunteer, particularly on the auction and Annual Fund, and when an opportunity opened up, it felt like a natural next step.

I became the director of annual giving, then associate director of development. By that point, I had been part of the community for over 20 years. I knew the people. I believed in the mission. I didn't just understand the work. I had lived it. That made the transition into an employee role not just easy, but meaningful. I felt like I was giving back to a place that had already given so much to my family.

What led you to the Enrollment Office?

When I was asked to consider Admissions, something clicked. I thought: this is exactly where I'm meant to be. I've experienced this school as a parent, a volunteer, and a staff member. I've watched students grow from curious four-year-olds into confident young adults ready to make a difference in the world.

I didn't need to study a script or memorize talking points—I knew what made OES special, deep in my heart. I could tell that story honestly, passionately, and from lived experience. It never felt like a job. It was a calling.

I remember once a parent asked me, "Why would I spend this kind of money on kindergarten?" I said: "Because you don't get a do-over. The foundation you lay in those early years is invaluable."

That belief, knowing the impact of an OES education, made the work personal. I wasn't just helping families make decisions; I was inviting them into something truly life-changing.

What makes OES Enrollment unique?

OES is unique because our enrollment spans such a wide range, from pre-kindergarten students just starting their learning journey to international boarding students joining us in Upper School. We tailor the admissions process to meet each family's needs while staying true to our mission.

Boarding is a special piece of our school's legacy. We've maintained a boarding program since 1869, and that diversity of perspectives enriches the entire school community. Building our international boarding program meant stepping into an entirely new world: recruiting abroad, meeting and forming lifelong relationships with consultants, and building trust with families thousands of miles away. I learned so much from my colleagues and those already in that space, and over time, I built strong relationships with people who shared our values and believed in our school.

Whether I was talking to a local family or one across the globe, my message was always the same: OES is a place where students thrive academically, emotionally, and spiritually. That's something every parent wants for their child.

What has it been like to watch OES grow and change?

After 41 years, I've seen so much change. Some of it is inspiring, like improving our campus facilities, and some of it is heartbreaking, like the Mount Hood tragedy that shaped us forever. But through it all, we've never lost our core. The heart of OES has stayed the same: academic excellence, a strong moral compass, and a belief that our students can and should make a difference in the world.

Every year brought new challenges, especially in enrollment. You had to stay nimble, adapt, and innovate. But even as we grew and evolved, we never compromised our values. That foundation, that integrity, is what makes OES so special.

What have you valued most about your time at OES?

The people. The community. The incredible students and families, faculty and staff, alumni, and volunteers. Driving down Nicol Road still gives me goosebumps.

To me, OES has always been more than a school. It's a place where young people are empowered to become their fullest selves. It's where they learn that their voice matters, their ideas count, and they have the power to make the world better.

I've always felt that it's a gift to be part of something you believe in with your whole heart. That's what OES has been to me. It's been a lifelong calling, not just a career. And I feel so lucky to have walked this journey alongside so many remarkable people.

I will always be a part of OES. This school is part of who I am, and I believe deeply in the difference we make, in the lives of our students, in the community we build, and in the world they go on to shape.



Ann von Ofenheim

Middle School Math Teacher

26 Years

Tell us a little about your background.

I started teaching while getting my graduate degree at the University of Oregon. I was a part of a pilot internship program, where I was paid to teach while attending my graduate classes. I completed my graduate degree in curriculum and instruction in 1981. After teaching for a few years in Eugene, I was accepted to teach third grade at an international school in Italy. I returned to Portland to teach and then moved to Virginia and taught sixth grade when I got married. After taking a few years off to stay home with my children, I taught French and Spanish at a private school in Williamsburg for a year before starting my career as a math teacher.

What brought you to OES?

I knew I wanted to return to Oregon where my family lived and I wanted a better school for my children. I visited both Catlin Gabel and OES, and I felt that OES was the best fit for me and my kids. I really enjoyed the people I met, and the middle school math position was exactly what I was looking for. Also, my sister had taught at OES previously and loved it.

My two children started at OES also—my son in second grade and my daughter in the fourth grade. It was fabulous that the three of us got to join OES at the same time.

What have you enjoyed most about being at OES?

What I've loved most is the Middle School faculty and students. The faculty are people I jive well with. They're full of energy, they're fun, they're supportive, they're flexible. They make up a wonderful community.

Are there any particular OES memories that stand out?

One of my favorite memories was coaching the first ever Aardvark faculty/staff dragon boat team to compete in the annual Portland Dragon Boat Festival! I loved sharing one of my passions with a wonderful cross section of OES folks. Another passion of mine was running so being able to start up and coach middle schoolers in cross country was a great opportunity. I had run cross country throughout middle school, high school and college and loved having the opportunity to share this with middle schoolers.

It was really fun—at one point I had 40 middle-schoolers out for cross country. I think the secret was donut holes. A couple times during the season, we would run to Sesame Donut for donut holes.

But seriously—I enjoyed helping kids learn how to become efficient runners and to improve their own best times, in addition to being a part of a team. I also loved working with the kids outside of the classroom finding that it enriched our relationship inside the classroom.

You are known as the Pi Day teacher! How did that start?

On March 14 of the first or second year I was teaching at OES, one of the parents said, "You know, it's Pi Day." As a result, Karen Seder (retired Middle School math teacher) and I put together a Pi Day celebration. It developed over time, with kids memorizing digits of pi, learning what pi is, and how it's useful in our lives. We incorporated that into puzzles, games, essays, and songs. And of course, eating pie!

What actually is the significance of pi?

It's interesting because in different places and at different times throughout history starting way back in ancient Greece, Rome, and Egypt people developed the concept of pi by discovering that for any circle the circumference divided by its diameter is always a little more than three, or pi. The students enjoy learning a huge variety of pi facts and then eventually using pi in their math classes.

For quite some time, memorizing 500 digits of pi was the record. Then, Calvin Chang '24 broke it by reciting 628 digits from memory! It's hard to imagine that record will be broken.

What are your plans after OES?

It's a little daunting to think about having too much time on my hands in retirement. But I have ideas. Outside of school I paddle outrigger canoes and now I will have more time to devote to that. Presently, I am training to paddle in nationals in October and, if we qualify, we will go to worlds in Singapore! I also want to volunteer and I want to travel, so I'm looking into some senior volunteer trips abroad where I can travel somewhere and volunteer for an extended period of time. I'll also have more time to visit my son (Jonathan '10) and granddaughter, who live in Canada, and my daughter (Casey '08) who lives in DC. Wanting to keep a connection with OES, I hope to continue tutoring math. I may even coach another dragon boat team next spring, but this time to students.



Katrina Perry

Upper School French Teacher

21 Years

Tell us about your background and what brought you to OES.

I got my undergrad degree at UC Santa Cruz and my PhD in French literature and gender studies at Cornell University.

I taught for 13 years at the University of Richmond, then my husband was offered a position in Oregon. I told him we could check it out, but I wasn't leaving my tenured position [laughs]. But in the end, we loved the idea of moving back to the West Coast, so he took the job, and I started looking around for opportunities to teach French.

The French teacher at OES was just about to leave to finish her practicum in school psychology, so when I called Rob Brisk (then head of the Upper School), he said, 'Can you come right now?' So I ended up teaching the last six weeks of class and then permanently.

What are your favorite memories of OES?

One of my most fulfilling OES memories is taking students on our three-week long French exchange every other year. We would travel to Sainte-Marie La Verpillière, a school just outside Lyon where each student stayed with a host family and attended school. We visited the region, including Les Baux de Provence, a medieval fortress, Avignon and Arles, and then spent the last three or four days in Paris. Upon our return the French students and teachers would come here to visit us and stay with their American host families. We would have up to 20 French students at OES that we would take on outings around Portland, up to Mount Hood, to the coast to play games on the beach, and to Seattle.

The exchange program ended in 2019. But I traveled with students to Morocco and Martinique on Winterims and I really enjoyed that.

Another favorite memory was an impromptu parade, the year that several athletic teams all quite unexpectedly won championships. Somebody grabbed instruments from the band room, and all of a sudden the whole Upper School was marching around campus, playing music and celebrating. It was completely out of the blue and so funny.

What do you appreciate most about OES?

It's great being around teenagers and sharing their energy, laughing with them and seeing their shenanigans.

From the people who maintain the buildings and the grounds to the faculty, everyone at OES is interesting and active and engaged both in the life of the school and in outside pursuits. That has been just amazing. And I will say, I have found this teaching much more inspiring and more fun and interesting than at the university level [laughs].

What are your plans in retirement?

I'm looking forward to spending more time with my grandchildren and traveling. My husband, who is also retired, and I are going to go camping and backpacking, and we're planning a trip to Japan to hike the historic Kumano Kodo pilgrimage route to visit shrines, and we'll stay in "onsen" villages built around thermal springs along the way. We can't wait!



Claire Kucera

Middle School Humanities Teacher

13 Years

Tell us about your background and how you came to OES?

I started my teaching career after traveling independently for a few years, when I realized that children are by far my favorite population. I was accepted into the New York City Teaching Fellows and earned my masters degree in education at Brooklyn College while teaching in the inner city of Brownsville, Brooklyn.

After I moved back to Portland, I taught at Trillium Charter School, an experimental, democratic charter school. After having my daughter (Uma '25), I changed gears and taught as an apprentice teacher-researcher at the Opal Charter School, where I was steeped in a philosophy inspired by Reggio Emilia. The year before coming to OES, I took an opportunity to teach internationally in Cumbaya, Ecuador and to explore that gorgeous country with my daughter.

When did you start at OES?

I started out as a first and second grade substitute teacher in 2011 and then the next year a first grade teaching position opened up, which was a brilliant, easy place for me to plug into. I taught first grade for seven years and then in 2019 I came to the Middle School to teach sixth grade humanities and wellness.

What has been your favorite thing about OES?

I would say my experience in the classroom each day, the ability to be so creative and responsive with the kids. I love the entire Middle School so much, and I love my coworkers. I'm a single mother, and having all of these adults in my community love and support my kid has been a really special experience. And I'd be remiss if I didn't say I loved being fed so well all these years. It meant a lot to me to be nourished so beautifully.

What are some of your favorite memories of OES?

I loved teaching first grade. It was about collective curiosities, for instance, one year it was about 'How does the heart get feelings?' We made an entire play about that. Or, 'How do trees communicate?' We spent the whole year in the OES woods. I loved following the kids and their true curiosities and then being wildly creative about how we shared our learning. I'll treasure those memories forever.

What are your plans after OES?

I am approaching this as a time to integrate and reflect on my last 20 years of parenting and teaching. I want to do a ton of writing about it. I hope to do a little traveling. I am also really passionate about the future of education. Things are changing really fast and we want to help protect our teachers' health—wellness has always been really important to me. And I want to help kids keep exploring their curiosity. We don't know everything about science, we don't know everything about history, and we should be open to new information as it comes.



Mark Henningsen

Grounds Supervisor

22 Years

After 22 years of devoted service as grounds supervisor, Mark Henningsen retired in April. While he chose not to be interviewed, his contributions to the school community are deeply appreciated.

Welcome New Board Members



Deana Freres

Deana Freres has resided in the Santiam Canyon for 18 years and serves as a volunteer board member for numerous regional organizations, including the Oregon Community Foundation, Santiam Hospital & Clinics Foundation, and the Stayton Public Library Foundation. She holds a degree in management science engineering from Southern Methodist University and was instrumental in the creation of the Santiam Canyon Wildfire Relief Fund (SCWRF), which she co-founded days after wildfires swept through the area in September 2020, and continues to lead the Santiam Canyon Long Term Recovery Group. Deana and her husband, Tyler Freres '94, are parents to Rand '24 and Theo '26. Tyler and Rand attended OES as boarding students, and Theo is a current student in the boarding program.



Peter Lyneham

Peter Lyneham is a partner at Global Alternative Funds. Previously, Lyneham was a managing director and founding member of Goldman Sachs' Infrastructure Investment Group. He began his career with Goldman Sachs in Sydney in 1999 and moved to London in 2004. Peter has a bachelor of commerce (hons) and bachelor of laws from the University of New South Wales in Sydney, Australia. Peter and his wife, Allison Lyneham, have two children, Sebastian '28 and Vivien '29.



Heather Paulson

Heather Paulson recently concluded a 17-year career at Nike, where she held senior leadership roles shaping strategy, leading enterprise transformation, building teams and businesses, and driving marketplace and digital innovation. She began her career as a lawyer and hedge fund investor, and holds a BS from Cornell University and a JD from Harvard Law School. She and her husband, Merritt Paulson, have two daughters, Cassidy '27 and Addie '29.



Amy Richards

Amy Richards is a partner at Educational Direction, an educational consulting firm for independent schools, and has been working with independent schools throughout her career. Richards earned both her undergraduate and master's degrees in science and mathematics from the University of New Hampshire. She was a member of the mathematics faculty at St. Paul's School in New Hampshire from 1984-94, then became a dean of students at Riverdale Country School in New York before becoming head of the upper school at The Spence School, also in New York. She then took a position as head of Crystal Springs Uplands School in California, where she served for 14 years. Most recently, she served as the interim rector for St. Paul's school in New Hampshire.

Amy and her husband, Frank, moved to Portland in 2019, and Amy has served on the OES strategic planning committee.

Lindsey Hoyt

ASSISTANT HEAD OF SCHOOL FOR STRATEGIC ENROLLMENT



Hoyt started her new role on July 1, 2025. Hoyt will oversee all aspects of strategic enrollment management at OES, building on the strengths of the current enrollment operations and envisioning the next iteration of strategic enrollment and retention.

Hoyt comes to OES from the world of selective higher education admission, serving most recently as director of admissions at Reed College, and previously in admissions leadership roles at Brandeis University and Tulane University.

Before transitioning to college admissions, Hoyt began her career in marketing and communications, leading the business-to-business marketing programs at a global retail and consumer goods consulting firm and at a law firm. She joins OES with extensive experience in transformational leadership, building creative and authentic marketing and communication plans, and executing mission- and data-driven enrollment management.

"Through my time in selective college admissions, I've long been familiar with OES and its incredible students," Hoyt said. "OES graduates are intelligent, empathetic, curious, and open-minded—exactly the kind of student colleges are looking for. I'm thrilled to join the community of student-focused educators, administrators, and parents that are nurturing such exceptional young adults, and lend my expertise to the continued growth and success of OES."

Scott Shlaes

CHIEF ADVANCEMENT OFFICER



Scott Shlaes, who also started his position on July 1, comes to OES with 20 years of nonprofit and educational leadership experience. Most recently, he served as chief development officer at Albertina Kerr, where he helped the organization rebuild its development function with an emphasis on relationship-based, mission-aligned approaches to the work. Prior to that role, he spent 11 years with the Portland State University (PSU) Foundation, where his last role there had him overseeing institutional partnerships for the university, which allowed him to support corporate and foundation relations, and alumni engagement around legislative advocacy. Shlaes developed a holistic university approach to corporate engagement by developing a dynamic strategic plan designed to focus institutional partnerships. As an integral member of the development team, he was involved in the collective effort to support the comprehensive campaign of the university. In addition to his work in development, Scott also taught Introduction to Spiritual Leadership as an adjunct instructor at PSU.

Shlaes has roots in independent and private schools, having graduated from North Shore Country Day School in the Chicagoland area. He also studied at the College of Wooster in Ohio with a BA in religious studies and returned later in life to graduate school, earning a degree in educational leadership and policy with an emphasis in leadership in sustainability education from Portland State University.

"I'm thrilled by the opportunity to join this remarkable community, build relationships with new colleagues, students, and their families, and work in partnership to advance the important work of this school based on a vibrant strategic plan that will create profound educational experiences to shape the way that current and future OES students interact with their peers and the world around them," said Shlaes.

Building Small Town Vibes

Incoming All-School Parent Partnership Chair Tracy Bryant looks forward to helping OES parents feel closely connected to the campus and to each other.



Having grown up in a small community in Alaska, Tracy Bryant understands the value of knowing your neighbors. She speaks fondly of being raised in a town with fewer than 5,000 people.

"Getting to know individual people in whatever community I'm in is very important to me," says Tracy. "I like volunteering in the classroom, meeting the friends of each of my kids, and getting to know the parents of those kids."

As the new chair, Tracy wants to create natural opportunities for OES parents to get involved in something that matters to them, and be a part of helping create events where parents can get to know each other.

"I'll be looking at the school calendar and seeing where we can find occasions for parent connection as part of other scheduled events. I think it's so helpful when people can put faces with names."

As a 10-year OES parent veteran with three children, Tracy remembers how confusing it can be when you are new to a school community trying to keep up with your students' schedules and knowing who to go to for different kinds of questions. She wants to be a reliable resource, especially for new families, in pointing people in the right direction when they need specific information, and also for helping them find ways to plug into community life at the school.

"I have gained a ton of knowledge over time having had kids now in every division," she said. "I have a good understanding of how the various parts of the school are woven together and look forward to serving as that touch point for others. I might not have all the answers, but I'll definitely know who to ask!"

In her early days at OES when Tracy had twin girls in kindergarten, she volunteered in small ways like helping to stir paint or accompany groups of kids on walks in the forest. Over time, she started to help support the creation of community events like the Lower School Fall Fest after other parents had stepped back from those kinds of roles, and she also served as a room parent for her youngest child. And now each spring, Tracy serves as the head volunteer for the Upper School Track & Field teams, representing over 80 student-athletes.

Before becoming a mom, Tracy earned a master of arts in teaching and had some experience teaching social studies at the middle and high school levels. She feels that the combination of her educational background and love for helping parents navigate questions, that she can be a good resource for school families.

"I've found a way to stay involved almost every year of our decade at OES and I love to help be an OES roadmap for people. If I don't know the answer to someone's question, and if I learn that there actually isn't an answer, I can work with both the parents and with the school to create the clarity we need!"

To contact Tracy, email:
tracy.bryant.oes@gmail.com



Getting to Know Incoming Student Body President Youssef Raslan

TELL US ABOUT YOURSELF AND HOW LONG YOU'VE BEEN GOING TO OES.

I've been going to OES since sixth grade (2019). My family and I decided that I would go to an independent school beginning in middle school. My sister, Alia ('23), had been going to OES since the sixth grade, and that helped influence my decision to come here.

We were only in the same division for one year, in Upper School, but I remember that time really fondly. We drove to school together in the morning, and she gave me advice. That was helpful as a freshman. It was such a big change from middle school, which is a less intense and demanding process.

WHAT ARE YOUR MAIN INTERESTS?

I lead the Middle Eastern Affinity Group. I played in the band my freshman year. I'm part of a youth group at my local mosque. I'm really big into coding, so I have a mentorship with one of my good family friends and a former Intel engineer that I code algorithms for all the time. By the time I graduate, I will have taken every computer science offering at the school. I love math; it's a language for everything. If you get a math degree, you can do whatever you want (laughs). Whatever I can do at the intersection of math and data science, I'd love to do it.

WHAT ABOUT ATHLETICS?

Football is my main sport, which I play outside of OES, but I also played lacrosse, and I credit a lot of my growth in high school to the lacrosse team and Sully [Athletic Director Dennis Sullivan] and the mentors in that program. Sully points out the things you need to hear most, and if you're willing to sit with that, it's such a rewarding experience.

WHAT INTERESTED YOU IN BECOMING STUDENT BODY PRESIDENT?

I've been told I was a leader since I was a kid, but learning how to leverage that and how to grow into that role was what I wanted to do. There have been ups and downs. I made mistakes. I didn't use my influence correctly, but that was the beauty of it, because I failed and I failed again. By the time I got to run for student body president, I think I knew what was expected. I mean, we've had a phenomenal last three presidents who set that precedent really—Arun, Alexander, and Don-Pharinho.

At a lot of other schools, the student body president is about just getting simple things done rather than actually being a representative for the school. As OES student body president, it's much less a spotlight than it is a responsibility, and that actually magnetized me to it more, because it demands respect and consistency, and those are two things I've been trying to develop.

WHAT IDEAS DO YOU HAVE COMING INTO YOUR ROLE?

First, I want to build a student suggestion platform, a live website



Lacrosse is one of the sports that Youssef dedicates himself to at OES.



Addressing the class of 2025 at commencement in June.

that's moderated, but students can suggest things and suggest changes at the school. Any submission that passes moderation gets an automatic review from the policy board. I did something similar to this with the service opportunities: I built a database where you can register for service hours. But I want to do something similar with the student input, because I feel like the current system is outdated.

Second, I want to bring back the athletic edge to the community board. I'm a little bit frustrated with the lack of interest in athletics we're getting recently. So, as an athlete, I want to bring that back.

From an academic standpoint, for the last few years, I've sent out a form to gather interest on different topics of study. I want this to be an OES tradition, where every year, a policy board creates it, and there's a year-long course suggestion form that you can fill out at any time, and the faculty can review it.

I have a ton of ideas, but most importantly, I want to do a student grant fund. Policy board, community board, and honor council all have budgets. Community board's is the most substantial and they need it the most. But the policy board and the honor council don't really use their budgets that much, and it's a pretty substantial amount, enough to fund a ton of different student projects.

I want to use that budget to create a grant fund where we can fund student ventures that want to fix something in the school or get involved in leadership for students who aren't necessarily on the policy board. I'm well aware that there are students who want to get involved in leadership, but maybe don't want the continued commitment of student government or don't quite have the voice yet. Because voice is something that you develop.

WAS THERE ANYTHING IN PARTICULAR THAT INSPIRED YOU TO RUN FOR STUDENT BODY PRESIDENT?

I went on a Winterim this past spring to Southern Utah. It was a pretty challenging trip, and I was the only junior—the oldest student by a mile. I encouraged the other students, sometimes saying 'stop talking and keep moving,' but other times understanding when to slow down, and when to play a game with a ninth grader who seemed kind of out of his element.

When I came back to school, I thought, "That wasn't that hard. I can do this, and it's rewarding." Not only did I feel good about myself, but I visibly saw that I was enhancing the experience of others.

I've always told myself that, no matter what success you achieve, if you can't bring a sense of kindness into someone else's life, it's going to leave you miserable. But I saw myself bringing that sense into other people's lives, and I wanted to chase it.

WHAT ADVICE DO YOU HAVE FOR SOMEONE WHO'S THINKING ABOUT GETTING INTO STUDENT LEADERSHIP?

I would say, if you're not sure about leadership, that you have a voice. No matter if you're the kid who gets scolded for being annoying in class, cause I've been that kid my whole life. The school teaches you that you can use every power you have for good. That you can turn from the obnoxious and the unsure into the leader and the one that's followed. It's not about making yourself be followed. It's about being worth following. So if you're not sure of your voice and you're not sure how to use it, understand that the growth will come. You can't ever write yourself off for being unsure of your voice.



Youssef said he came away from a Winterim in Southern Utah in spring 2025 with greater motivation to be a leader.

by Jana F. Brown, Guest Writer

Drive for Excellence

Maya Khalife-Hamdan ’21 is headed to Colombia on a Fulbright.



On the way to the last final exam of her college career, Maya Khalife-Hamdan ’21 received an email. It was then that she learned she’d been selected for a Fulbright U.S. Student Award. For the OES graduate, the honor came after years of diligent work. As this magazine goes to press, the prestigious scholarship is sending Khalife-Hamdan to Colombia for 10 months, where she’ll teach English to university students.

She selected Colombia because of its recent emergence from a decades-long civil war and its ongoing reconciliation process. “What strikes my attention with Colombia is that within these peace and reconciliation processes, citizens are included,” says Khalife-Hamdan, who will live in South America until May 2026. “They’re very much intertwined.”

While there’s some wiggle room in her future, Khalife-Hamdan knew she wanted to gain a year of international work experience before her next chapter —law school. Although her academic destination has yet to be confirmed, she plans to pursue a J.D. and is also considering a Ph.D. in political science. As an attorney, Khalife-Hamdan hopes to explore child advocacy, international law, human rights, and immigration law. She’s interested in combining legal practice with academic research to “enhance practices and make the profession more just and equitable.”

Born and raised in Portland, Khalife-Hamdan attended French immersion school until enrolling at OES in ninth grade. Although she had also studied Spanish in middle school, her affinity for languages took off in high school, and she received the World Language Senior Award at graduation. She credits OES with allowing her to explore her interests through electives, particularly in Spanish classes, where she progressed to college-level work, studying literature, politics, and culture.

“You can’t study U.S. history without studying Latin American history,” she says. “I developed a tremendous appreciation and admiration for the Latin American region because I believe it serves as a worldwide example, and leaders should be looking at the region for political insights and how citizens can be better included.”

Her interests led Khalife-Hamdan to double major in international studies and Spanish at Rhodes College in Memphis, Tennessee, graduating in the top 1% of her class and earning Phi Beta Kappa and summa cum laude honors. During her undergraduate years, she discovered international opportunities that have further informed her future aspirations. The summer after her freshman year, Khalife-Hamdan worked in Greece at the University of Macedonia Law School’s Center for Democracy and Law, conducting Covid-19 policy research. She also volunteered at a migration processing center, where she served as a translator, using her foreign language skills (which now also include Arabic) to assist migrants, primarily from Syria and Afghanistan.

Comparative politics courses allowed Khalife-Hamdan to further explore Latin America. Much like her interest in Colombia, she quickly became fascinated by Chile’s transition from military dictatorship in 1990 to becoming “one of the strongest democracies in the world” in less than 30 years. Her drive for excellence has long meant that Khalife-Hamdan is not satisfied with book learning only and actively pursues opportunities to see what she’s learned in practice.

That desire to bear witness led to a transformative experience in the summer of 2023, when Khalife-Hamdan worked in Santiago, Chile, as a Mertie Buckman international intern, conducting research at the University of Chile Law School’s Human Rights Research Center. Despite being the only undergraduate among lawyers and professors, she wrote two articles

that were published in the university's Human Rights Journal, becoming one of the few non-native Spanish speakers—and only undergraduate—to contribute to the publication. She was also deeply impressed by "how connected these lawyers were with citizens" in Chile.

"Just getting that firsthand experience," she adds, "I learned that this is what I want to do with my career."

That firsthand experience informed Khalife-Hamdan's senior honors thesis at Rhodes, "Breaking the Silence: Chilean Courts and Justice for Dictatorship-Era Sexual Violence," in which she examined how Chile transformed from disregarding sexual violence cases to fully addressing them in courts. Khalife-Hamdan presented her research in April at the Midwest Political Science Association Conference in Chicago.

As she prepares to embark for Colombia on her Fulbright, Khalife-Hamdan calls the opportunity "a real honor." It's one more seminal experience that will inform her future.

"The whole point…" she says, "is looking at the world and asking yourself, 'How can I fix this? How can I make it a better place?' That's what I want to do."

Trusted Tech Guide

Creative entrepreneur Bilawal Sidhu '09 is a curator of excellence.

To simplify the ever-evolving world of technology, Bilawal Sidhu '09 references the powered exoskeleton worn by inventor and entrepreneur Tony Stark (also known as Iron Man) of Marvel Comics and film franchise fame. An entrepreneur himself, Sidhu uses the analogy to help demystify artificial intelligence.

"AI is like the Iron Man suit for Tony Stark," he explains, noting that ideas are king, "where Tony Stark remains the one conducting the orchestra, the one still in charge. AI serves as a force multiplier as humans maintain agency and control."

The way Sidhu sees it, this approach encourages people to use AI as a tool to enhance their capabilities, rather than replace them. And he should know. With a career that so far has spanned AR (augmented reality) to VR (virtual reality) to 3D mapping, and beyond, Sidhu sees AI as the latest technology empowering like-minded creators to work at "higher levels of abstraction." While his current focus involves mapping the frontier of AI and emerging technologies to help others navigate its rapidly changing landscape, Sidhu already has probed the deepest levels of technology as a self-described "creatorpreneur," which he defines as someone who's half business, half creative artist.

"These aren't opposing forces," Sidhu explains, "but two halves of the same coin."

A respected voice in AI and tech, Sidhu has built a career on connecting disparate worlds. Born in Punjab, India, he arrived at OES as a sophomore in 2006. Inspired by the computer graphics on shows like Mega Movie Magic, Sidhu was intent on one day working in visual effects and seeing his name scroll by at the end of a Star Wars movie. But at OES, he discovered he flourished in a team environment, a point solidified through a Lemelson-MIT InvenTeams project.



"My teachers helped me explore new ways of thinking and collaborating," he says. "That helped me discover myself and realize I thrive at building bridges across missions and teams."

Now more than a decade in, Sidhu has spent his career building bridges between complex technical innovations and their practical applications. Post-OES, Sidhu's path continued at the University of Southern California, where he studied computer science and business administration, allowing him to take technical electives in computer graphics while developing business acumen. His timing was perfect: the iPhone had recently launched, and the user experience design field was booming. Sidhu was able to channel his early interest in visual effects into creating digital software experiences.

Fresh out of college, he joined Deloitte's Emerging Technologies group, where he worked on AR and VR projects during the early days of Google Glass and Oculus VR headsets. It was exciting work, but the desire to remain "in the eye of the storm" led Sidhu to Google in 2017 as an AR/VR technologist.

"We were in the earliest days of VR media," he recalls, "working on the camera systems used to capture things in 3D and also the productions to get them out at scale." His projects included groundbreaking VR experiences at Coachella, the Teen Choice Awards, and with celebrities like Elton John and NBA star Kevin Durant. Sidhu was also part of the team that "scanned" gymnast Simone Biles to create AR experiences that allow users to view 3D models of the Olympian performing her flips and tumbles from any angle.

At the top of the cool project list, Sidhu jumped at the chance to join Google's photogrammetry ("the science of extracting 3D information from photographs") team, "Map the World." As a product manager, he led 60 engineers (mostly PhDs with expertise in computer vision and machine learning), and oversaw the processing of imagery from satellites, Google's fleet of airplanes, and street view cars to create comprehensive 3D models of the planet. This digital twin of Earth, he explains, powers everything from driving directions to flood forecasting and AR experiences.

"It's about building and maintaining this digital replica of the planet and constantly updating it," he says. That initial effort led to Sidhu co-founding and launching Google Maps Immersive View, an interactive experience that enables users to "do a vibe check of a place" before visiting, and ARCore Geospatial API, which "turns the whole model of the world into a canvas for augmented reality developers."

In addition to being cool, the 3D mapping experience fundamentally changed how Sidhu perceives the world. "Every time I'd walk by the Ferry Building, where I lived in San Francisco," he says, "I'd almost start seeing the different layers of the 3D model."

That depth of perspective now informs Sidhu's approach to AI and new technologies, where he's established himself as a prominent voice. After leaving Google in 2023 to venture out on his own, he was invited to give a TED Talk, which led to podcast opportunities and his current role as a technology curator for TED conferences.

Sidhu views AI as "the ultimate dual-use technology. It's this distillation of all human knowledge and creativity," he explains. Rather than fearing AI, Sidhu advocates for embracing it as a tool that enhances human capability, a view with practical applications in his own creative sphere. With a small team, he manages content across multiple platforms that would not be possible without AI tools.

Significant to Sidhu's personal mission is sharing knowledge and creative ideas with others. He does that through TED, as an advisor and angel investor, and through his many social media platforms. His TikTok channel alone is nearing one million subscribers, while his library of content has received more than 500 million views. Going back to that team-first approach he developed at OES, Sidhu also sees himself as a curator of excellence, highlighting deserving creators and researchers with smaller platforms.

Sidhu describes his role as a trusted guide who helps people navigate technological frontiers while promoting excellence across interdisciplinary domains. He encourages creators, educators, and others to embrace what's to come, to lean into the technology that already has changed his world—and is rapidly transforming ours.

"In a world where code and content are disposable," he says, "the question really is, 'What's the most compelling idea?' It turns out the idea-people are probably the best positioned to win in the future."



Class of St. Helen's Hall 1965: Mary Lampson, Jeanne Edwards, Ellen Guest, Connie Leben, Katherine Jeffcott, Annie Thompson, Lillian Stewart, Nancy Kneisel Bueller, and Heidi Shuford

Women of St. Helen's Hall

This year's alumni reunion included the 60th anniversary of the class of 1965 from St. Helen's Hall.

A few of the alumni who attended shared their thoughts about the reunion and their memories of St. Helen's Hall.

Ellen W. Guest said, "As the first graduating class from the OES Raleigh Hills campus, the class of 1965 proudly carried the St. Helen's Hall banner from the old red brick building on 13th street to the sprawling green hillsides of SW Nicol Road. As a class, through the years, we have relished our every reunion in impressive numbers! The value of our class reunions has grown surprisingly deeper and more rewarding with every passing decade. The young girls we knew have become the women we love!"

Mary Lampson shared, "The Boarders and Day Students ... two different groups looking over the fence at the others' "greener grass"! We envied them their freedom and a misguided handful of them envied our close-knit 'Society of Miss Behaviors'!"

Lillian Stewart said, "For me, being actively involved in my class reunion helped me to solidify who I am and how that happened in a large part because of my excellence education over the 12 years that I was at Oregon's first school for females which still resonates today in my decisions and life. Being taught to be an independent, lifetime learner makes each day a blessing and a gift. I am grateful for my strong foundation in all aspects of life."



"I loved it! Most fun ever! We just get better and have more laughs as the years roll by. Sixty years of friendships does just that."
– Heidi McIsaac Shuford

OES IN ASIA



Danrong Wang ’16, Rick Rees, Head of School Michael Spencer, John Holloran, Ran Wei ’09, and Brian Yang ’11, in Shanghai.



Alumni, parents of alumni and current parents gathered in Shanghai at a party hosted by Maggie Lu and Charles Wu, parents of Billy Wu ’24.



Alumni, parents of alumni, and current parents celebrate in Seoul at a party hosted by Jay Rhee and Claire Choi (parents to Daniel Rhee ’26).

ALUMNI INDUCTION

Class ambassadors Isabelle Hatler ’25 and Catherine Gewecke ’25 leading the senior parade through the Middle School.





Etti Teherani-Ami ’24 and Julian Ettinger ’24 speaking to the class of 2025 at the alumni induction.

LIFELONG AARDVARKS



Class of 2025 Lifelong Aardvarks



Hillary Day, Ben Ehrlich ’25, Paul Ehrlich

REUNIONS



Alumni gather with current boarding students after Chapel.

Class of 1975: Liz Robbins, Lynea Davis, Chris McMurtry, Ellen Montague, John Egan, Lisa Frey, Jane Honeyman





Alumni reminiscing over their senior photos



Walker Jones ’20, Rob Orr, Ian Bergquam ’20



Class of 2005 celebrating at Loyal Legion: Bill Thanhouser, Alexis Rhiannon, Kei Matsuyama, Signe Bergmark (guest of Tiiu Magi ’05), Neil Lakin, David Bow



Class of 2020: Alex Bullard, Ethan Bankowski, Asa Brown, Sophie Chen, Harper Hummelt, Rachel Holzman, and Alexa Tsai

SAVE THE DATE

ALUMNI & REUNION WEEKEND

MAY 29–30, 2026

OES Forms Alumni Leadership Circle

by Jana F. Brown, Guest Writer

Thuy Minsberg '02 credits her time at OES not only with shaping the person she is today, but also with opening up a new world of possibilities. Having grown up in a modest neighborhood in Hanoi, Vietnam, Minsberg considers herself fortunate to have been awarded a scholarship to attend OES for three years.

More than 20 years after her graduation from the school, Minsberg is now the mother of two school-age children and has joined 15 other alumni on the Alumni Leadership Circle. The group is intentionally diverse in terms of decades represented and geographic locations, and consists of highly engaged alumni representing the graduation years of BDH 1970 through OES 2013 and hailing from multiple cities around the U.S.

"The Alumni Leadership Circle offers me an incredible channel to support OES in doing what the school does best," Minsberg says, "which is to foster a nurturing and supportive ecosystem where budding talents can thrive and reach their fullest potential."

The OES approach to alumni engagement has undergone a thoughtful transformation over the years, culminating in the Alumni Leadership Circle, a strategic advisory group designed to strengthen connections between alumni and the school while supporting the future of OES. While alumni boards existed in the 1980s and 1990s, they were eventually disbanded. Around 2005, alumni leadership was reformed, establishing what would become the Alumni Council. By 2016, the council was operating at its peak with 15 members, including a president who served as an ex-officio member of the OES Board of Trustees. The council functioned as a formal working board with subcommittees focused primarily on alumni engagement through events, including a revitalization of Alumni Weekend, the establishment of regional events in large cities, the creation of alumni holiday gatherings, and the development of an alumni-student mentorship network.

When Covid-19 hit in 2020, the event-focused council struggled to maintain momentum in a virtual environment. Though members successfully helped to launch the first-ever Alumni Day of Giving in 2021, by 2022 the council had naturally dissolved as the pandemic made in-person gatherings impossible.

With the support of Head of School The Rev. Michael Spencer and others, the Alumni Office formed the Alumni Leadership Circle in August 2024, engaging a mix of former council members and new volunteers in an advisory role. The first meeting was held a month later, with plans for the Alumni Office to host quarterly gatherings focused on alumni philanthropy, student mentorship, and alumni engagement through events and communications. Members of the leadership circle also serve as strategic plan thought partners.

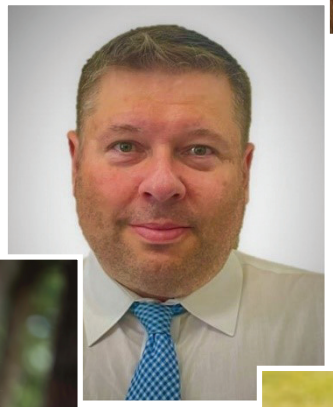
"It has been wonderful to connect with such a highly engaged group of alumni who feel so passionately about the mission of OES," Spencer says. "The experience and perspective they share is invaluable, opening up a window into the school that opens up the past, informs the present, and helps us envision our future together."

The quarterly meetings, which are primarily virtual with one scheduled in-person retreat, are designed to encourage consistent engagement while respecting members' time commitments. This model addresses challenges to the previous structure, in which expectations such as monthly meeting attendance created barriers to participation. While the Alumni Leadership Circle is not charged with any governance responsibilities, it focuses on providing valuable advice and perspective to school leadership.

In addition to Minsberg, members of the leadership circle include previous Alumni Board members Helen Townes '85, Laura Axon '86, and Tara Witt '92, former Alumni Council member Annika Jensen-Lamka '90, and former OES trustee Sarah Raymond '91, along with leadership circle newcomers Kris Van Hatcher '70, Tammy Brooks '86, Jennifer Paauwe-Riffe '86, Daniela Brod '89, Todd Crawford '94, John A. Van Ballegooijen '95, Kay Washington '96, Opher Kornfeld '10, Clara Dawley '11, and Sara Eaton '13.

This advisory group will focus on alumni philanthropy, student mentorship, and alumni engagement through events and communications.














ALUMNI CLASS NOTES

We are changing the publication of class notes to once per year, in our winter/spring issue of OES Magazine. Submit a class note and read class notes online

SAVE THE DATE
for these upcoming events!

November 21	Grandparents and Special Friends Day
December 18	Alumni Holiday Party
May 29-30, 2026	Alumni Reunion Weekend







FRIENDS • FOOD CARTS • FUN

HOMECOMING

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 26, 2025 • Festivities begin at 4 p.m.

Come together as a school community, support our Upper School volleyball and soccer athletes, enjoy delicious, local food trucks, and maybe even get a photo with Aardy!

TURF FIELD
4:15 p.m. Varsity Girls Soccer vs. Catlin Gabel
6:15 p.m. Varsity Boys Soccer vs. Catlin Gabel

MORISSETTE COURT
6 p.m. Varsity Girls Volleyball vs. De La Salle



OES ATHLETIC HALL OF FAME







The OES community is delighted to invite you to the 2025 OES Athletic Hall of Fame ceremony. This year we will be inducting a new class to honor the alumni and former staff members on their individual and team accomplishments as well as meritorious service to the school.

INDUCTEES

Bill Lake BDH '70
John Koroma '72
Tara Sorensen Witt '92
Jo-Anne Landry Suffoletto '94
Ben Chessar '95
2005 Girls Volleyball (State Champions)
2005 Girls Soccer (State Champions)
2005 Boys Soccer (State Champions)
Jon von Behren, for Meritorious Service

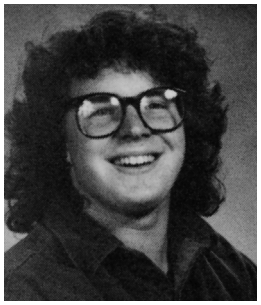
Saturday, September 27, 2025 • 6 p.m.
OES Athletic Center

TICKETS:

oes.edu/ahof

WE REMEMBER

ALUMNI



John Whitson ’88

The Alumni Office at OES was saddened to learn of the passing of John Whitson ’88 on July 7, 2025. One of his classmates, John Porter ’88, shared: “John was student body president after me during the 1988 school year and was a survivor of the Mt. Hood tragedy in 1986. Many people loved, admired and respected John for his authentic personality and genuine way of showing up in life. I’ve never known anybody with a more cynical, quick wit and genius sense of humor. He really was one of a kind.”



Damien Albert Ritter ’94

Damien Albert Ritter, born in Stayton, Oregon to Dan and Armande Ritter of Salem on February 16, 1976, passed away at his home in Portland, Oregon on June 3, 2025 at the age of 49.

The following is an excerpt from his eulogy, written and shared by his good friend Travis White ’96.

Damien had a brilliant mind. It moved fast and it was constantly devouring: new ideas, finding out how things worked, fit together, collaborated. He was incredibly tactile and loved to get his hands dirty, bringing the intangible into the tangible; producing. As much as he was creating music, dance, language, art, hairstyles or innovating other forms of expression, always pushing his own boundaries, he was also building, farming, painting and framing houses, fixing plumbing, old cars and tinkering in a space somewhere between practical engineering and artistic expression. He had a difficult time sitting still for very long, is the thing. . .

He was a kind man who cared deeply for those close to him. Compulsively generous, Damien sought to be of service to others. His outsized helping of confidence was contagious, his magnetism was irresistible, and even from a young age he forged indelible bonds with people. He would lift his friends up. He would delight in describing his friends to others—and would do so as if he were the witness to greatness, spinning tales as if they would become legends.

Many considered him to be a sentimental fellow. He held on to letters, mementos and other items he felt were imbued with a memory, an experience or some other value—perhaps as a raw material for some new creation from his work bench. But beyond mere sentimentality, Damien had an impeccable ability to appreciate a given moment; to recognize in the present what an experience meant—whether he was monkeying around with his cousin John with a hose on a hot roof or was marooned in the wilderness with a tall friend—with a glint in his eye that said: “this is the good stuff.”

FORMER FACULTY AND STAFF



Sara Ritter

Sara passed away on February 6, 2025 from complications with pneumonia. A poet, Sara recently completed her master of fine arts in poetry at Pacific University. She graduated from the Honors College at the University of Oregon in 1997. Before coming to her true calling as a professional writer, Sara was a marketer, a school administrator at Maitripa College in Portland, Oregon, a donor relations manager at Oregon Episcopal School from 2013-2016, and a development officer at Copper Canyon Press and Safe Crossings Foundation.

One of her greatest professional and spiritual accomplishments was playing a key role in organizing the three-day Environmental Summit with His Holiness Dalai Lama in conversation with spiritual, environmental and political leaders in the Pacific Northwest in 2013, hosted by Maitripa College in Portland.

In her professional work and in her personal life, what stands out about Sara is the care she gave to others. So many shared that when she was talking to them, it was like no one else existed. She loved life and love and wanted others to find their own joy. Among her favorite things were writing and sharing poetry, being a mom and step-mom, a wife, playing games, listening to music, working together on a cross-word, watching a cooking show, playing with and caring for her cats, Starbuck and Yuri, and visiting the Oregon and Washington coasts.

FORMER TRUSTEES



Julieanne Thanhouser

Julieanne Attebury Thanhouser, known as Anne, passed away peacefully on June 10, 2025, at 72, surrounded by her family, after a long battle with dementia.

Born in San Diego on May 24, 1953, and raised in Amarillo, Texas, Anne was a gifted student who pursued anthropology at Southern Methodist University, conducting fieldwork in Jordan and Egypt. She moved to Portland, Oregon, for her career at Tektronix, where she met Edwin Way Thanhouser Sr. They married in 1980, and Anne dedicated herself to raising their four sons.

Anne was deeply committed to service, volunteering extensively with the American Red Cross and Oregon Episcopal School (she served on the board of trustees from 1993-1998), and co-founding Gately Academy (now Bridges Middle School) for students with learning differences. A devoted Christian and member of St. John the Baptist Episcopal Church, she was known for her hospitality and beautiful rose garden.

She retired to Loreto, Mexico, in 2009, later returning to Portland for care. Anne is survived by her four sons, including Spencer Thanhouser '03 and Bill Thanhouser '05, five grandchildren, and siblings. She will be remembered for her intellect, hospitality, and unwavering commitment to family and community.



Photo by Aaron Walker

James R. Walker

James R. Walker, a member of the OES board of trustees from July 1, 1979 to June 30, 1982, passed away February 2, 2025, at age 83, of natural causes. He leaves behind his wife of 59 years, Patricia, and three sons, Aaron, David and Joshua, two of whom attended OES from 1977-1980, and four grandchildren.

James attended Olympic College and University of Washington but found his alma mater at Lewis & Clark College, where he was a member of the Albany Society. Professionally, he was employed in sales and business management.

Faith was an important part of James's life. He was a longtime member of the Episcopal Church. He also contributed his time to the Bishop's Standing Committee, St. Philip the Deacon Vestry, and numerous diocesan committees. Community involvement was central to who James was. He also served on the Legacy Hospital Board.

James took great joy in mentoring young people, volunteering in schools, counseling church summer camp, coaching sports, and supporting his sons' and grandchildren's activities. He was an avid reader and home gardener in his spare time.

James cherished the friendships and relationships he built over the years. He took immense joy in watching others grow, always encouraging family, friends, and beyond. His journey was one of love, learning, and service to others.

Please email questions or submissions to alumni@oes.edu or call 503-416-9367. Submissions should be no longer than 300 words and will be edited.

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