



NEWS

INSIDE:

- Alumni Spotlight..... 2**
- Staff News 3**
- O.S.S. Website Live..... 4**
- NASS Honors..... 3**
- Lunch News 3**
- 2006-2007 School
Events Calendar 3**
- Name the Newsletter
Contest..... 4**
- Year Round Giving:
Monthly Donors 4**
- Keeping in Touch 4**
- Wish List 4**

STAFF CONTACT INFORMATION:

John Parsons
Executive Director
451-5234 Ext. 153
jparsons@omahastreetsschool.org

Dwayne Hawkins
Principal
451-5234 x151
dhawkins@omahastreetsschool.org

Charles Wilson
Dean of Students
451-5234 x152
cwilson@omahastreetsschool.org

Tracy Morrison
Office Manager
451-5234
tmorrison@omahastreetsschool.org

Member:
National Association of
Street Schools
www.streetsschools.com

Phone: (402) 451-5234
Fax: (402) 451-7048
www.omahastreetsschool.org

P's PONDERINGS:

By John Parsons

I had an echocardiogram test last week. It's a fascinating, and eerie, procedure used to monitor the heart. Thankfully, the physical muscle looked good, although there is something quite disarming about peeking into your own body and seeing it work.

After Bill Morrison's column in July, several well-meaning readers inquired about the status of the Parsons. Why take a sabbatical? Were we healthy? Were we sane? Had we lost our passion for the Street School, and/or were we leaving? I'll clear it up.



John Parsons
Executive Director

First, we've been so wrapped up in OSS the last eight years that the perspective seemed off kilter. Running full tilt is often overwhelming, and it's certainly tiring (physically and spiritually). Second, this past year wasn't the easiest for the Parsons. Mrs. P dealt with the sudden illness and death of her mom in October. In February her grandmother passed away, and then an uncle died of brain cancer in April. Lorri also grappled with two significant memory-loss issues from September thru May, both of which required Mr. P to revoke driving privileges for short periods of time. Remedies offered by loving relatives cured the ailments, and the solutions were so simple that they belied the depth of her trouble. I hope you can see the need for refreshment and rejuvenation.

We've all heard the Scripture that goes something like "God will never give us more than we can handle." Well, it was close in 2005-06. While separation was hard, it was needed. It took me a good two weeks to really embrace the sabbatical idea. In week 3, I attended an economics college class in Richmond, VA. After spending a week with like-minded, spirit-led, kid-loving compadres, I was itchin' to get back to school. The family took a few small trips to rest up before the national conference in mid-July. By then, the engines were revved and ready to go.

So from my angle, I underwent another heart procedure in June. It is scary to open up your heart, look inside, and see if there's a problem. I honestly wasn't sure what I'd find upon closer inspection. Once I had time away, spent mostly sweating in the yard and eating bagels at Panera, I know that my heart remains with the city's lost children. That great philosopher, Whoopi Goldberg, said in Sister Act II, "Girl, if you get up in the morning and all you can think about is singing, then you're supposed to be a singer." When I get up in the morning, all I can think about is Daunte and Phillip and Manny. All I can see is a dozen beautiful young ladies in their prom dresses. The heart is strong and healthy. Oh yeah, I'm back.

ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT

Where Are They Now?

A Profile of 2001 Graduate Courtney Kammerer



Courtney Kammerer

Perhaps the most significant accomplishment at OSS is acquiring one's diploma.

The Omaha Street School exists to give kids a second chance to earn a high school diploma, and that's exactly what Courtney Kammerer needed. Kicked out of Central High School in Omaha for skipping classes and fighting, Courtney was at the end of her academic rope. She failed to meet the guidelines for admission into the OPS alternative high school, and Central would not allow her to re-enroll. There appeared to be no options.

Seeking Answers — Courtney's mom, Karlin, read a column in the World-Herald about the Parsons and the beginning of the Omaha Street School. The Kammerers were touched by the story of how a Denver attorney would leave his law practice and return to Omaha to start such a school. It also appeared to meet their need of finding a school for Courtney. The timing could not have been better for the family, and Courtney came in for an interview. While at OSS, Courtney discovered that the staff truly cared about her. "They were really devoted to helping me academically and personally," she said. "I learned to respect people with different beliefs, and I learned to listen to the views of other people--and not to be so focused on just me."

Graduated on Time — Some people that Courtney used to hang around with told her that she would never make it. Compared to some of the challenges Courtney faced during high school, her time at the Omaha Street School went really well. "Did I get good grades?" "Yes," she said. "Did I skip some school? Well, yes I did, just ask Mr. P. I think he implemented a new rule on skipping class just because of me. Otherwise, I would have gotten all A's!"

Courtney graduated from OSS in 2001, the same time her class at Central High School graduated. She is especially proud of this achievement after being put down so long by people that knew her before she attended the Omaha Street School. Some of the changes were that Courtney now believed in herself, embraced the love and support of staff and volunteers at OSS, and set out to achieve what she knew she could, graduate on time!

Work and Family Focus — After graduation and while attending Metro Community College in 2002, Courtney's mom developed health problems. Courtney backed off on her schooling so she could take care of her mom while continuing to work and support her family. One of Courtney's exceptional characteristics is resiliency. "This was my reality," she said. "There were no other choices. I needed to do these things, especially take care of my mom. I took one day at a time."

Plans for Her Future Unfold — While attending Metro, a former teacher became a customer of Courtney's employer, the local QuikShop. Recognizing her potential, this teacher told Courtney about the Goodrich Scholarship Program at UNO. The program is specifically geared to students who are at-risk of NOT going to college. With the encouragement of those around her, she began the application process. The Goodrich Program requires transcripts, letters of recommendation, placement exams and interviews. Courtney and her family were cautiously optimistic, but it wasn't until the acceptance letter arrived that she fully appreciated this opportunity. And it all began with the school that gave her a second chance.

A Successful Year — Courtney completed her first year in the program in May 2006. The focus of the first two years is core subjects like English and Math. Later, she will learn more about the specifics of her major, likely Social Work and/or Psychology. And will it surprise you to hear that she wants to work with children and teens? When asked what she would be doing today were it not for OSS, she responded "That's a scary thought...I'd probably be managing a fast food restaurant or a gas station."

Congratulations Courtney! Keep up the great work. We are proud of you!

For additional information on the Goodrich Scholarship program go to www.goodrich.unomaha.edu.

STAFF NEWS



Kathleen Salach-Thies

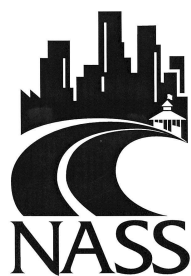
Kathleen Salach-Thies tendered her resignation to the Omaha Street School, effective August 15, 2006. Last year, Kathleen married Paul Thies, a great guy (partially because he's a Benson Bunny), and she immediately inherited three young men who lost their mom a few years back. Kathleen took her new role as a mom seriously and decided that it was best for the family if she was at home more. We have great respect for that decision, and believe it is the right one for the Theis family.

Kathleen's intent is to offer her talents in marketing, grant-writing, fund-raising and all-around development services to non-profit organizations in the metro area, on a consulting basis. Her tenure at OSS included outstanding work on the school's DVD project, publication of the annual report, and in-depth research and writing of highly successful grant proposals. As with all staff, Kathleen wore many hats at OSS, and was helpful with human resource issues, technology challenges and coordination of hundreds of functions.

The Omaha Street School staff wishes Kathleen and her family the best in her new endeavor. If you'd like to contact her, please call the school office and Mrs. Morrison will provide information on how you might get in touch with her. The next step for OSS isn't yet laid out, so please direct any development related questions or issues to John Parsons, Executive Director.

OSS Website is LIVE!!

The summer months have been filled with projects ranging from refurbishing the Library/Student Center to the redesign and implementation of Omaha Street School web site. Well, on August 2nd, the web site went live! This exciting project revamped OSS's dated web site and brought it in line with today's technology. Highlights include photos and success stories from our students, an on-line donation link and even downloadable forms. The Omaha Street School would also like to take this opportunity to thank the anonymous donor who paid the entire development cost for the web upgrade. WOW! It is through these faithful supporters that the school is able to thrive. You can check out the new website at www.omahastreetschool.org. If you have feedback or questions on the web site, please feel free to contact Bill Morrison at 451-5234.



NASS Tabs OSS for ACCREDITATION

During the 2006 National Association of Street School Conference this past July, the Omaha Street School received endorsement to execute the accreditation process from CITA through NASS. In the preliminary assessment, OSS received the highest readiness scores of all the street schools in the NASS network. Over the next year, school administrators will be working very closely with CITA and NASS to complete all

necessary documents and evaluations to ensure a smooth approval process. If you have questions or would like further information regarding OSS and what this accreditation means to our students, please feel free to contact John Parsons at 451-5234.

School Lunch

The experts say the most important meal of the day is breakfast. We have found that to be true, so we provide cereal to feed our hungry students when they arrive in the morning. But we also believe that keeping our students fed during the entire school day helps them focus on their school work. We have wonderful volunteers who provide delicious, nutritious meals every day. If you would like to participate this year, we have some days open. Also, we are going to have a full day of classes on Friday, so that day needs to be filled in as well. Can you or your group provide a lunch for students and staff once a month on a Friday throughout the school year? Please email or call Tracy Morrison at tmorrison@omahastreetschool.org, or 451-5234.

OSS Calendar of Events

▼ 2006 First Semester ▼

August 21	First day of school
October 19	OSS and MISSION: Educate (formerly National Association of Street School's) holds a Special Fundraising Event. Save the date: don't miss this event!
October 20	Quarterly Student Awards Ceremony
October 20	OSS Hosts MISSION: Educate (formerly National Association of Street School) Annual Fall Board Meeting
November 21	Thanksgiving luncheon event for students, staff and volunteers
December 22	Christmas Celebration for students and staff; Quarterly Awards Ceremony

▼ 2007 Second Semester ▼

February*	Mavs Hockey: Omaha Street School Recognition Night
March*	OSS Sports Awards Banquet and Silent Auction
March 15	Quarterly Student Awards Ceremony
May*	Golf event — Look for more in the upcoming Newsletters
May 13	Graduation Ceremony
June*	Annual Volunteer Picnic

Events without published dates will be announced in future newsletters and on the web site.

Name the Newsletter Contest!

Put on your thinking caps! We need a new, creative name for this newsletter. Send your ideas to Mrs. P at: lparkers@omahastreetsschool.org. The winner will be picked by a joint student/staff committee. If your name is the winner, you will be treated to a yummy lunch here at school with the students!

THANK YOU!

Summer is always a slower time financially for OSS. Yet here we are at the end and we have made it through! We would like to thank all who have contributed, whether it was a one-time or a monthly gift. We operate on a daily basis because of your generosity. Without our donors, OSS would not be able to serve the students that God brings our way. THANK YOU!

Keeping in Touch

Have you moved recently or changed your phone number? Have you given us your email address yet? If any of these apply to you, please send an email with your new information to:

tmorrison@omahastreetsschool.org

A BIG THANK YOU TO ALL WHO DONATED ITEMS FOR THE STUDENT BACKPACK WISH LIST! WE HAVE THE ITEMS WE NEED TO EQUIP OUR STUDENTS EFFECTIVELY!*

*If You're Interested — Before school starts on the 21st, we could use some help assembling the packs. If your interested in helping, please call Tracy at 451-5234.

Wish List — "Big Ticket Items"

- 1 Window Air Conditioners
- 1 Industrial size fans
- 1 2-6' long white boards
- 1 2-8' long white boards
- 1 Fireproof locked storage for documents and media

Wish List — "Stocking Stuffers"

- 1 Copy paper
- 1 Staples
- 1 Paper towels
- 1 44 gal. trash bags (heavyweight)
- 1 Bags for 5-6 gal. trash cans
- 1 Toilet paper
- 1 Bottled water
- 1 12-cup coffee maker and serving carafe/s (new)
- 1 Coffee and coffee supplies
- 1 Plastic silverware
- 1 Canned Soda pop

4



3223 N. 45th Street
Omaha, NE 68104-3711

NON-PROFIT ORG.
U.S. POSTAGE PAID
OMAHA, NE
PERMIT NO. 407

A New School Year!