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CHANGING TIDES

Ocean Tides gears up for annual open house

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support of Ocean Tides and its programming.

NARRAGANSETT — Ocean Tides, the Lasallian, fully accredited school and residential program offered at the Christian Brothers Center on Ocean Road, has been helping young men find their way since 1975. Offering a full high school diploma in addition to a certified special education program and career and technical educational programming, Ocean Tides Narragansett School is licensed by the Rhode Island Department of Education and accredited by the New England Association of Schools, providing unique pathways for students who do not typically enjoy such opportunities. On Oct. 25, the school will host its annual fall reception and open house fundraiser, with the public invited to attend the event in



Submitted photo

Two recent graduates of Ocean Tides Narragansett School hold up their diplomas.

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dream for their future that they continue to work on.”

Graduates from Ocean Tides have gone on to find positions in their various careers of interest, enroll at state colleges and universities and/or enlist in the military. Last school year, the facility in Narragansett enrolled nearly 60 students, many from diverse backgrounds, in grades 9-12 and awarded three diplomas and four GED credentials.

The school is home to 18 teachers, seven social services workers, 24 residential counselors and a handful of administration professionals. Ocean Tides offers classes in all areas of typical high school education,

along with vocational pursuits, such as the school’s culinary arts program, which helps students gain perspective on employment and working with others. Students live at the Narragansett campus, attend classes (with small class sizes) and vocational education opportunities (culinary, arts, construction trades, 3D printing technology, cosmetology, horticulture, automotive technology, plumbing and welding), along with regular counseling sessions, community service opportunities (including hosting senior citizens on campus). Those enrolled at Ocean Tides can also work at and with local businesses as part of the school’s community outreach program.

“When a young man encounters the vocational education team at Ocean Tides, a career interest inventory is done,” a brochure

detailing the school reads. “Soon, he is helping out in the kitchen or the Brothers’ dining room, or other places on campus. Those successes then become an off-campus job to learn basic skills. Experiencing the world of work, the young man learns its expectations for punctuality, attitude, energy and being a team player.”

Before a student is accepted, he is screened by the school administration to ensure he is ready and willing to enter the program. Given the severe educational difficulties these students have experienced in the past, “Ocean Tides seeks to provide creative, individualized programs that meet the needs of all in its care,” according to its website.

The school’s annual open house and fall reception serves as one its largest fundraisers throughout the year. It also provides the public the opportunity to go inside the school and see its facilities and services firsthand. According to Martino, monies donated at this year’s event will go on to benefit a number of aspects of the school’s operations.

“Our Fall Reception and Open House allows community members to come to know Ocean Tides a bit more,” he said. “It is also a fundraiser for some of our special activities and programs including, pet therapy, outdoor and adventure recreation activities, reward trips and life skills programs, including fiscal literacy and independent living skills opportunities.”

In addition to its Narragansett facility, Ocean Tides also houses a day school-only program in Providence. In part funded by the Rhode Island Department of Children, Youth and Families, the agency that also matches at-risk teenage males with the school, Ocean Tides still relies on outside and community donations for its annual operations. Further, public school administrations also recommend

The school takes its mission from the story of John Baptist de La Salle, a French priest who was challenged to build schools for the boys of Rheims, France, after efforts were being made to do the same for the young girls of the town. When asked what was the motivating factor that still propelled the Brothers of the school to carry out a mission nearly 400 years old Martino spoke to the power of the original challenge and the school’s results.

“Knowing that inside each young man, there is a person who wants and deserves the best and brightest future possible,” he said. “For some Brothers and staff, we are continuing to keep alive our Lasallian vision of care. For others, seeing young men grow and change through good mentoring relationships and care.”

“You can watch the young man who came from a difficult situation regain self confidence over time, or see the young man who arrive so angry he was breaking a picnic table (punching windows show new ways to cope) and new insights into his past,” he continues. “You see young men who have only had trouble in school thrive with good grades (they have never earned before. You watch how students like to help others and serve senior citizens in community service. You watch young men have time to grow and transform on the path to their best selves, and you want that for him and for the next young man in need.”

The school’s annual Fall Open House and Reception, which will feature an open bar, hors d’oeuvres, pasta, carving station, desserts, door prizes and a raffle, among other activities, will take place at the school, 6 Ocean Road, Narragansett, on Oct. 25 from 9 a.m. to 9 p.m. Tickets are \$75 per person (\$360 for a group of six and \$500 for a group of 10). To purchase tickets, donate if unable to attend the event or for more information, please call (401) 789-1016 or contact Bianca Hebert at bhebert@oceantides.org.