

# One to One

News from **School One**

Celebrating Creative, Respectful, and Rigorous Education since 1973

Fall 2011

## Quest for 'a different way of learning' led father and son to School One's door

by **Julia Volynsky**

*As School One inches up on age 40, we're old enough to enroll second-generation students: the children of our alumni. Among this year's graduating seniors was **Jacob Orson**, son of School One alum **Ted Orson '77**. Ted is an attorney at Providence's Orson and Brusini Ltd.; Jacob is heading off to Nicaragua to improve his Spanish. We sat down with Ted and Jacob to hear their take on School One then and now.*

### How did you each end up at School One?

**Ted:** I was at Slater Junior High in Pawtucket during the Vietnam War. I was very much against the war, and most of my teachers

didn't like that. I was known as the "little red." I was not very happy there. I had a wonderful French tutor, Odelca Otis, whose son Nick went to ALP (Alternative Learning Project). At that time ALP was a public school and School One was a private school, but they shared a building. You didn't know who was in ALP and who was

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## CONGRATULATIONS TO THE CLASS OF 2011!



Fifteen students received their School One diplomas this past June. They are (from left): **Jacob Orson, Lesly Pollack, Dillon Walsh, Kristen Burns, Angus Gore, Blair Goodman, Sage Buckley, June Rose Trimbach, Julian Prip, Nathan Bonn, Ava Ginsberg, Devin Fahey, Joseph David, Wilson Keithline**. Not pictured: Nathan Archer. *For article, see page 2.*

### NOTE FROM JENNIFER

I'm writing this at the start of the school year while students are registering for a great selection of courses, from calculus to ceramics, from playwriting to documentary video. Hurricane Irene forced us to postpone our annual Farm Day, but no other hurricanes – symbolic or real – are on the horizon. Instead, we're filled with all the hopes and nervous jitters that greet a new school year.

This year, even by School One standards, we have a wonderfully diverse student body. Of our 85 total, we have three students from China, one from Crete, one from Moscow and one from Martha's Vineyard. We have artists, science whizzes, students on the autism spectrum and, yes, several students with interesting hairstyles.

Our students, along with our board, staff and parents, have begun work on a new strategic plan. We've identified many ways we'd like to improve the school: new technology, a redesigned special education program, expanded ways to showcase our students' talents in the arts, and the completion of our new website.

The strategic plan also targets our heating system. Our current one is original to the building, and the engineer who last assessed it said, "It's living on borrowed time." We've researched various options, and all are complex and expensive. It's not a glamorous project, but it's an important one.

As the year progresses, we'll share our strategic plan with you and welcome your feedback. Whether through giving, thinking, or visiting, we hope you'll help shape our 2011-12 school year.

— Jennifer Borman, Head of School

# School One!

## Board of Directors

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## Administration and Full-Time Staff

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*School One, a dynamic, inviting community, empowers its diverse students to take responsibility for their learning through challenging, creative, and personalized educational programs in order to prepare for productive futures, become self-reliant, commit to important ideas, make sense of their world, and contribute to it in useful ways. School One does not discriminate on the basis of age, color, sex, sexual orientation, race, religion, national origin or disability.*

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## Grads cross finish line, collect diplomas

### Express gratitude for teachers, staff and families

They completed their comps. They filled out their portfolios. They served their communities. At long last, School One's 15 seniors graduated at RIC's John Nazarian Center on June 10 in front of an audience of their families, teachers, friends, alumni and invited friends of the school.

As in previous commencements, each student was introduced by his or her advisor and given the chance to talk about what the occasion meant and to thank those who had helped him/her along the way. Many spoke of discovering or deepening their talents in visual media, music or fashion thanks to **S1**'s arts curriculum. Some described overcoming challenges with the help of the school's supportive staff. Others said they might not have made it through high school at all, or at least gotten much out of the experience, if they hadn't found **S1**.

For anyone who has attended a **S1** graduation, hearing these individual stories is what distinguishes the event as a heartfelt celebration of each student's gifts, spirits and accomplishments.

This year's graduates will be attending an array of colleges and universities including:

- The New School for Jazz and Contemporary Music
- Marlboro College
- The School of the Museum of Fine Arts of Tufts University
- Columbia College
- The School of Visual Arts
- Hampshire College
- Savannah College of Art and Design
- CCRI
- University of New Hampshire

## Alumni, too, get props at commencement



**Ted Orson '77, Nicole Buccini '05, Megan Bradley '00, Marshall Vale '89, David Higgins '89 and Michaela O'Donnell '87**

This year at graduation, we honored alumni from the previous four decades for their enthusiastic involvement and support for School One. Some of their good works included serving on **S1**'s Board of Directors and on Board committees. Others have shared their time, talent and expertise with current students by visiting the school and talking about their careers in the arts, education and many other fields. Honorees were nominated this past spring by members of the **S1** community.

In attendance at the ceremony were **Ted Orson '77, Nicole Buccini '05, Megan Bradley '00, Marshall Vale '89, David Higgins '89** and **Michaela O'Donnell '87**. Nominee not pictured: **Timi-Ann Neri '88**. Nominees who were unable to attend: **Arika Bready '06, Claire**

**Townsend '05, Cole Hassan '09, Elicia Castaldi '96, Jill Hayes '09, Margie Feldhuhn '06, Rebecca Valentine '09, Samson Kartaoui '09, Sarah Fleisher '09, Seth Lepore '92, Siobhan Reddy-Best '09 and Than Wood '02.**

As a token of our appreciation, each received a stylish, limited edition black baseball cap emblazoned with **S1**'s logo.

You, too, can be a member of this exclusive club and receive your very own cap at next year's graduation! Give us a call, arrange a visit and share your time with us. See what's new and what's remained the same (like Cary's mustache!). Contact Mufi Sullivan at (401) 331-2497 or msullivan@school-one.org to tell us how you're doing and how you'd like to reconnect with School One.



## Annual funds and the math behind 'every gift counts'



### Thanks to you, our 2010–2011 Annual Fund was a success!

I am so pleased to announce that despite uncertain economic times giving rates for the 2010-11 year rose above last year's among alumni, past parents and friends of School One. Due to your generosity, our Annual Fund finished strong.

However, we cannot bask in this success! The new fiscal year brings the ongoing challenge of raising money for our oversubscribed financial aid program. While more than 70% of **S1** families receive financial aid, every year new and returning families are denied when funds run out. This hard reality prevents many deserving high school students from benefiting from our wonderful program. Giving to our Annual Fund directly and positively affects the lives of **S1** students.

While the phrase has a nice ring to it, it also happens to be true.

When it comes to asking foundations, large donors and corporations for money, one thing they all want to know about is the number of people supporting the annual fund. Broad-based participation by donors of modest as well as significant means proves our willingness to invest in **S1** and signals confidence in our ability to carry out our mission.

So, yes, every gift to School One really does count, and no gift is too small. Your participation matters in more ways than one to our fundraising success!

Mufi Sullivan  
Director of Development

For more information, or to visit the school and see your donation at work, contact me at (401) 331-2497, or [msullivan@school-one.org](mailto:msullivan@school-one.org)

School One 2011 – 2012 Annual Fund

I'd like to make a gift to School One of:  \$50  \$100  \$250  \$500  \$1,000  Other: \_\_\_\_\_

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You can also donate online at [www.school-one.org/development/giving](http://www.school-one.org/development/giving)

Mail to:  
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Make a difference in the day-to-day lives of our students with your gift today! Thank you for your support!

— Please use the enclosed envelope to send in your donation. —

## Hosts needed for international students



This year the School One community is excited to welcome two new students from China and one from Russia! If you are interested in being a host parent or family for students from China, please contact Julia Volynsky, Admissions Coordinator, at (401) 331-2497 or by email at [juliav@school-one.org](mailto:juliav@school-one.org).

## Did you know...

- 1) School One has a mascot – do you know what it is?
- 2) School One had a sports team – do you know what sport?
- 3) School One has been located at several different addresses – do you know where the other locations were?
- 4) Cary has not always had a mustache – what year did he grow the “stash”?
- 5) School One is approaching a BIG BIRTHDAY in 2013 – will it be 30, 40 or 50 years old?

See the bottom of p.2 for answers

## Two generations of Orsons at School One *(continued from p. 1)*

in School One. This was the second year of School One, in 1974. Odelca suggested I look at it, and I came home and said, “Dad, I want to go to School One.” And he said, “OK.”

**Jacob:** I was at Classical High School for three years. By the third year I just stopped liking it. The whole educational system there: it’s entirely a left-brain-oriented system. It was frustrating being there, and I started looking at other schools. I looked at School One because my dad had gone there. It’s set up differently. I liked the emphasis on being relaxed, on art and not having to do so much memorizing in every class.

### Tell me about the students at School One in 1974.

**Ted:** The kids were arts oriented and really bright. A lot of the students were looking for a different way of learning. It was a hippie school in a bowling alley. Bowling booths and bean bag chairs made up the furniture.

### Did you go to college right after School One?

**Ted:** I went to college for one year at George Washington University. Then I took a year off, went to Israel, worked on a kibbutz, hitchhiked across Europe and came back and transferred to Hampshire College. After that I decided to go to law school at Northeastern University.

### Did you tell Jacob about School One?

**Jacob:** My mom told me to look at School One, actually. I heard stories from my dad that it was relaxed and it didn’t have the same structure, so I was intrigued.

### Do you think School One has changed over the years?

**Ted:** There are still a lot of similarities, but we live in a different world now. Back then there were no home computers, no cell phones. The spirit I see here is similar to the type of spirit that we had. It was an experiment when I began there. It’s pretty solidly rooted now, and I think there will always be a place for it. I am thrilled to see that people want to learn in different ways as much now as they did then.

### Favorite classes?

**Ted:** Natalie Robinson taught History, and it was my favorite subject. We would pick a topic, go out and buy books and then read about it and talk about it in class. I am still close with Natalie to this day. She had the biggest influence on me of anyone outside of my family.



**Ted Orson** circa the late 1970s, not long after graduating from School One.

**Jacob:** Music. I came in never having played an instrument. I was pretty proficient in playing hand drums by the end of the year.

### Favorite memory?

**Ted:** Back in those days there were fewer regulations. We had a French teacher named Gordon Argo who took us on trips to Quebec City. A bunch of us would pile in the back of his mail truck, drive up and camp out. That was the most fun I had.

**Jacob:** I don’t have one in particular. Every thing I learned I guess. It’s good to know that I didn’t waste my time doing mindless busy work.

### Jacob, what are your plans after graduation?

**Jacob:** I am going to Nicaragua to a language school. I will also be working in a school in the mountainous region in Estelí. My plan is to become proficient in Spanish and to teach, because I want to be a teacher eventually.

### What will you do after Nicaragua?

**Jacob:** I have ideas...I don’t know. I’ll see what’s cool. I didn’t want to go to a university right away. This program means I will be doing actual work, which I think is very important, versus just being in a classroom and passing tests. I might go in the future. I’m not going to stop learning, though. I can always read books and self-educate. Nicaragua has an amazing history, and I am very interested in it.

### How long will you stay in Nicaragua?

**Jacob:** I plan to be there for a year.

**Ted:** I think he’ll be there for two years.

### Will you send your children to School One, Jacob?

**Jacob:** I don’t know! I don’t know that I will be in Rhode Island...

*Thanks, Ted, and good luck, Jacob!*

# Your gifts – and presence – made Scholar Dollars 2011 a great night out

by Mufi Sullivan

The balloons were filled, the tables were set, the auction items were arranged and the parking lot at Rhode Island Country Club was...closed! Despite the challenge of parking on Nayatt Road, Scholar Dollars 2011 was better than ever. With the added online auction, this year's event raised more than \$30,000 for the School One Financial Aid Program.

Thanks to the hard work of the dedicated Scholar Dollars Committee and School One staff, 130 guests enjoyed a delicious buffet, listened to wonderful music performed by School One students and bid on a bevy of exciting auction items.

We want to acknowledge everyone who made a donation, bought an ad in the program, sponsored a table, volunteered his or her time and attended the event. The evening was a success thanks to *you*. A very special thanks to committee members Linda Barrett, Doug and Jenny Boone, Gianna Boulet, Kate Brandley, Lisa Buckley, Linda Daniels, Alan and Nancy Ginot, Marlies Huijberts, Jean Hunter, Susie Leahy, Jane Pear, Caitlin Romano, Alison Townsend and Julia Volynsky.



We are already in the planning stages for Scholar Dollars 2012 and welcome your thoughts and suggestions. Please contact Mufi Sullivan at (401) 331-2497 or msullivan@school-one.org to volunteer or make a donation.

## Get cozy, with SOFA!

A great way to get involved and meet other School One families is to join the **School One Family Association.**

For the past year SOFA has been co-chaired by Linda Daniels and Susie Leahy, whose goal is for SOFA to provide support and become a social network for School One parents. They hold gatherings, alternately, at The Edge Cafe (mornings) and at McBride's Pub (evenings). Both are in Wayland Square.

Throughout the year SOFA members help organize events, such as the Harvest Dinner, Valentine Candy Sale, Scholar Dollars and Staff Appreciation Day. They also serve on the Interview Committee and on the parent panel for the school's Open Campus days.

Watch for an email about an upcoming event. All parents and care givers are encouraged to attend!

For more information about SOFA, and the School One community in general, please contact Linda at (401) 274-4772, or ldanielshopkins@verizon.net, or Susie at (401) 295-7997, or justusknuckleheads@msn.com

## FARM DAY 2011 — Students get back in touch, and back to nature, at Laurie's farm





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## UPCOMING EVENTS

**Wednesday, October 19**  
Harvest Dinner

**Wednesday, November 2**  
Open Campus  
9-11 a.m.

**Thursday, December 15**  
Alumni Gathering  
4-7 p.m. at School One

**Sunday, December 18**  
"Tash" Art Showcase & Sale  
1-3 p.m. at School One

## Student work from a recent School One Art Show



Anna Russell



Ian Burke



Jackson Collins



Chelsea Riordan



Joe David



Zia Andreoli