

## Supporting Students and One Another: Three Educators Reflect on Their OTA Training

Three dedicated educators, all with a breadth of experience in secondary schools, took time from their busy schedules to reflect on their training with One Trusted Adult and how it has enhanced their interactions with students and colleagues and informed their teaching or administrative practice.

**Angelique Titre, Sharon Baker, and Dan Love** each attended in-person OTA training or completed the online Foundations for Educators course and read Brooklyn Raney's flagship book, *One Trusted Adult: How to Build Strong Connections and Healthy Boundaries with Young People*. While the location, school setting, and role of these education professionals may differ, all walked away from their OTA training with a useful vocabulary they can share with students and colleagues, practical connection tools they can use every day, and a renewed sense of their work's importance.



Angelique notes that OTA's message, particularly the notion of "being who you needed, struck a chord: "It resonated so deeply that I continued to seek ways to authentically support the younger generation, most specifically my daily interactions with students. One Trusted Adult's concepts stay with me, guide my thoughts each day as I reflect on my interactions with students and athletes, and are reflected in my current practices."

*OTA professional development models its mission. The message of being who you needed rings so true for educators. Helping educators, coaches, mentors, etc. who care deeply about supporting young people do the work in the most professional and valuable way is critical. We were able to get on board with the mission immediately—we were inspired and also given incredibly relevant tools to transfer to our work with young people the very next day. —SB*

### **Here's how these professionals' interactions with students changed after OTA training.**

- Since the training sessions, I've made significant changes in how I engage with students. I've dedicated considerable effort to establishing healthy boundaries and seeking necessary support when required. One of the most profound changes for me was learning to refrain from trying to handle everything myself. I used to carry the mindset of wanting to "take care of all of the babies." However, after experiencing early burnout and engaging in reflective discussions with colleagues throughout and after the training, it became clear that I needed to adjust my approach and interactions. This shift was essential to ensuring that I could optimize a positive impact on student achievement. —AT
- We refer to our OTA training consistently. We make sure to put in place caring boundaries while being accessible, but we also show our students how they, too, should value and develop mentoring relationships. We have engaged many of the activities in the Ripple Journals in our advisory curriculum to help students and mentors consider (1) who they are, (2) what their goals are, (3) how they engage with others in great ways, and (4) what they need on the road to achieving their goals. It is an organized and supportive approach that nestles beautifully in our advisory programming and in the mission and vision of the school. —SB
- We did not have a common language for building trust with students and each other before OTA. Now, students and staff are using the same vocabulary to build trust in everyday moments. OTA has improved the effectiveness and efficiency of conversations between staff and students. —DL

**OTA training also supports educators' personal wellness and career, helping them craft effective, rewarding practices they can sustain.**

• OTA starts with the assumption that we as educators/mentors/advisors/coaches care deeply about our work with youth. From there, it builds on making those interactions the most impactful, supportive, and adaptable as possible. That's what we want and need. When we work with youth, especially those who need us more than they realize, it can be hard. We may find that we are both buoyed and depleted by the work. Having the ABCs [Accessible, Boundaried, Caring] of the work and so much great support helps us place the hard moments where they need to be, learn and grow, and ultimately impact those around us, which makes us feel great, too. It truly is portable knowledge that makes sense in so many interactions with youth, adults, colleagues, and groups. —SB

• The OTA training has significantly influenced both my personal wellness and career by validating my concerns, hopes, and aspirations when nurturing relationships with students. There were moments when seeking support or articulating the challenges with struggling students was difficult. However, by actively establishing boundaries, collaborating closely with colleagues as a team, and reflecting on my own practices, I now find joy in being a Trusted Adult for students. Looking ahead, I aspire to create a club or program in the future, providing a safe space not just for children but also for colleagues and adults who may benefit from having a trusted adult! —AT



*Angelique Titre with Brooklyn Raney*

• Just as OTA uses the Ripple Journal in its work with middle schoolers, I, too, journal to help process complex feelings so I do not perseverate on negative thoughts. The Ripple Journal has shown me helpful graphic organizers and writing prompts that I use in my reflective practice. —DL

One Trusted Adult applauds the dedicated educators who are doing the work with youth every day. With enthusiastic school adults like these, the OTA mission—ensuring that every young person can name at least one trained, motivated, and committed trusted adult—is in excellent hands.

# Teacher Bios



## Angelique Titre

Part of the dedicated team at the Chappaqua Central School District in New York, Angelique has specialized in secondary special education for the past nine years. Beyond the classroom, she acts as a mentor to new teachers and a field hockey coach for middle and high schoolers. Before joining the faculty at Chappaqua, she taught in a low-income Title 1 school in New York City. Angelique's teaching journey began in 2016 through a teaching fellowship, which sparked a deep interest in analyzing the nuances between urban and suburban education settings.



## Sharon Baker

Director of the Middle School at Hathaway Brown School, an all-girls pre-k through grade 12 independent school in Northeast Ohio. She has worked in education for twenty-four years, nineteen of them at Hathaway Brown. As a teacher, advisor, coach, and administrator, she has dedicated her work to serving youth, developing leadership, and encouraging healthy relationship skills for youth (girls, in particular) and their mentors.



Sant Bani School

## Dan Love

Head of School at Sant Bani School, a preschool–grade 8 independent school in central New Hampshire, has worked at various institutions in his nearly thirty-year career in education. He started as an Outward Bound Instructor in Colorado before becoming a public school teacher, an international teacher in Italy and Mexico, and an International Baccalaureate (IB) Coordinator and Dean of Faculty in New Hampshire. Before his most recent position, he was the Director of Teaching and Learning in Chennai, India. He has presented nationally on his doctoral work, which focused on students' sense of belonging at independent schools.