



ONEIDA MOUNTAINEER

www.oneidaschool.org

A bi-monthly newsletter of Oneida Baptist Institute

May/June 2023



The Class of 2023 graduation exercises took place May 13, 2023. This year's graduating class was comprised of eight local day students. Of our dormitory students, three were from Kentucky, and our nine international students came from Ethiopia, Nigeria, South Korea, Thailand and Senegal.



W.F. 'Bud' and Kay Underwood Hall, with its windows overlooking green hills, was a beautiful venue for the Junior-Senior Banquet on May 6th.

Father's Day Offering

Father's Day is a great time to remember OBI and to help spread the word about this important ministry to young people. We have mailed a letter to KBC churches and are grateful to our many friends and partners. Here are some ways to support the Father's Day Offering:

- **Pray** for God's continued provision for OBI.
- **Give** as you are led.
- **Share** about OBI with others; direct them to the OBI website: www.oneidaschool.org
- **Offer** to speak about OBI in your church or group.



Meet some of our 2023 graduates

Caleb followed family example of serving

Caleb is the third of his four siblings to graduate from OBI. His family moved to Oneida from Florida when his parents joined the OBI staff in 2013.



Caleb's family has long-standing ties with OBI starting with his paternal grandparents who joined the OBI staff in the early 1980's. His father attended OBI in grades 7-10. His aunt and uncle have served at OBI for about 15 years, and his maternal grandmother joined the staff a few years ago.

Growing up in a small, rural community benefited Caleb and his active siblings as they safely walked between home and campus for sports practices and other activities. He added, "By growing up in a small community, I was able to get to know the people nearby more than I would have in a large city."

Caleb appreciated being able to go to school in a Christian environment. He noted, "It helps to have people around you who are Christians and can help you understand whatever you are struggling with." For the last two years, he served as the sound technician during chapel services.

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An A student, Caleb maintained top grades at OBI even when he was busy with Academic Team and tennis practice. He stated, "I kept good grades while doing other activities by just paying attention in class." Caleb took advanced placement and dual credit classes and worked as a library assistant in the Career Placement program.

The faculty and staff named Caleb the Most Outstanding boy in grades 7-11 and "Mr. Oneida" as a senior. Caleb plans to attend Union University in Tennessee to study foreign languages. He is interested in a career as an interpreter. □

Destiny found confidence and friends

Destiny was a fifth grader when OBI opened its lower school to day students. Her older brother, Quentin, also enrolled and graduated with the OBI Class of 2021.



The siblings lived with their grandparents just a few miles from campus. Destiny explained, "I never knew my parents. My Mamaw and my Papaw brought us up." The family was very active in their local church, and Destiny looked forward to attending a school where she could continue learning about God.

From the start, Destiny said, "I like it here. It was fun! I liked the friendliness of everybody and the friendships I made." At one time, Destiny was known to be shy and introverted, but she noted, "My friends influenced me to come out of my shell. I'm more talkative and outgoing now." As a sophomore, she was named the Most Improved sophomore girl by the faculty and received the Brad Dorrrough Friendship award, an award voted on by the student body.

Destiny explored a variety of interests at OBI including the Academic Team, drama and Student Council. She joined the volleyball team for the first time as a senior. She explained, "I wanted to give it a try since it's my last year, and my friends were in it."

Being a part of the OBI community helped Destiny through the difficult time of losing both of her grandparents to illness five months apart in 2021. She reflected, "I still feel the grief of losing them, but I know they're in heaven so I know they're OK and not suffering anymore."

Destiny was awarded a President's Award at graduation. She plans to attend Campbellsville University in the fall. □

Wyatt finished strong at OBI



When schools closed in 2020, Wyatt opted to be home-schooled and work outside the home. He struggled to complete his school work, and family tensions rose. After a "falling out" with his family last summer, Wyatt went to live with a friend who had attended OBI since 2021. Wyatt recalled, "He told me about OBI, and was trying to get me to come. He thought it would be fun to play basketball together."

Before Covid, Wyatt had played basketball and football. The idea of finishing high school while playing sports and living independently appealed to Wyatt. He lives about an hour from campus, but moved into the OBI dormitory for his senior year.

He felt nervous at first but noticed, "Everybody here is friendly. The staff is friendly. I felt right at home!" Just a few weeks into school, some of Wyatt's friends recruited him to join them in the OBI choir. Wyatt enjoyed the chance to travel with the choir to Kentucky Baptist churches.

Wyatt enjoyed basketball season and getting to know his new teammates. "Everybody played well together, especially for a younger team with not many varsity players. I learned some good life principles," he said.

Wyatt was able to make up credits and graduate on time. He had not considered college, but with the influence of his friends and teachers at OBI, he decided to apply to the University of Kentucky. He was accepted and is looking forward to continuing his studies next fall. He plans to work toward a business degree. □

Phil enjoyed new opportunities

Phil enrolled as a senior from Senagal this year. In his short time here, he demonstrated such personal growth and positivity that the OBI faculty awarded him the Mountaineer Award for the Class of 2023. Phil wanted to finish his education in the U.S. because, "I wanted a new challenge and to get opportunities to play sports. My parents wanted me to get a better future, since they struggled when they were young."

Though Phil was ineligible to play for OBI's varsity teams, he participated on JV teams and helped to coach the younger players. OBI's structured schedule helped Phil to balance school work and sports practices. He said, "My grades at OBI are better than last year. I could not maintain my grades at home, because I was practicing too much. I had more time here."

A Christian since age nine, Phil said, "It's hard for us to connect with God sometimes, so I think chapel was good to have that reminder every day." He plans to attend Travecca Nazarene University to study either agriculture or physical therapy, both areas that would benefit his community back home. □



Friends from Asia set positive example in academics, citizenship

Three friends from Thailand and a pair of siblings from South Korea arrived at OBI on the same day in August, 2019. Though they spoke different languages, the group had an immediate connection as Asians. Three of them—Taraporn, JiHee and Jasmine—were freshmen who experienced life at OBI together in school, cocurriculars and dorm life. The trio became known for always reaching out to welcome other Asian girls.

Taraporn “Wawa”

Taraporn, whose nickname is Wawa, is from Thailand and knew about OBI, because her brother, Win, graduated with the Class of 2019. Wawa looked forward to her chance to come to OBI for high school. She said, “It’s my dream, and it’s for my future. In America, there is nice education.”

When they first arrived, Wawa noticed, “I met staff who were kind and friendly.” Having friends from home gave Wawa confidence as she attended class and cocurriculars. She joined a variety of activities including tennis, swimming, cross country, basketball, yearbook staff and choir. She played the guitar and sang in a student music group which led worship during chapel services.

Wawa explained her busy schedule saying, “I grew up in a church. My parents always taught us to do our best and to always assist and serve.”

At OBI, Wawa took advanced placement and dual credit classes. She plans to attend Campbellsville University to major in business. The OBI faculty named Wawa “Miss Oneida,” an award given to a senior who is outstanding in Christian character, academics, and overall involvement in campus life. Wawa also received OBI’s highest graduation honor, the William A. Evans Award. □

JiHee

From South Korea, JiHee and her brother, Junhee, arrived at OBI in 2019.

JiHee appreciated the warm welcome she received from the Thai students. “Even though they don’t know Korean, we all kind of know each other’s language. We take care of each other,” she said. Her friends were a comfort this year since her brother (OBI ’22), was not on campus.

JiHee explored her interest in both sports and fine arts. She played volleyball, cross country, basketball and tennis. A longtime pianist, she enjoyed accompanying the OBI choir and the student worship group. She also joined the Academic Team and Student Council. JiHee noted, “Sports, clubs and volunteer work helped me gain experience and leadership. Instead of study, study, study, there is more to learn from other people. The education here is better for us as human beings!”

She struggled with English at first, and when she failed her first test, she vowed that it would not happen again. She worked harder to improve her English skills and stayed up late to study. On her next test, she earned a B and thought, “Oh, I might be able to do this! I might be able to get at A!” JiHee’s teachers named her the Most Improved freshman girl.

Listening to the advice of older friends at OBI, JiHee enrolled in honors, advanced placement and dual credit classes. Her hard work resulted in her becoming the Class of 2023 valedictorian. The faculty named her the Most Likely to Succeed senior girl. JiHee is headed to the University of Kentucky to study medicine. □



Left to right: Jasmine, Taraporn, JiHee

Jasmine

Jasmine and her older sister, Ava, attended church with Wawa and Win at home in Thailand. Studying abroad was an exciting opportunity for Jasmine, though she had one concern: “I didn’t know any English. I had to learn a lot and work hard before I came.”

Jasmine was impressed by Oneida’s rural surrounding and OBI’s new girls’ dormitory where she enjoyed always having friends around. She said, “It was very fun! We cooked together, watched movies, talked. We came together at night to do homework.”

Jasmine joined basketball her first year at OBI and was a starter the last two years. Activities she shared with her friends included tennis, yearbook staff and choir.

During the pandemic, Jasmine completed her sophomore year at home by taking online classes. She was very happy to return in-person to OBI in 2021, though it was bittersweet to watch Ava graduate in 2022.

Jasmine appreciated the opportunity that she had to attend OBI. “It might be the best choice for my life that I decided to come here. In Thailand, it can be very hard for some people to do this,” she stated. Jasmine received a President’s Award at graduation and is planning to major in accounting at the University of Kentucky next year. □

Would you like to contact us?

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Alexis grew closer to Christ and gained independence

From an eastern Kentucky community about two hours from Oneida, Alexis was “on board immediately” with the idea of attending OBI and living in the dormitory. Though she has a good relationship with her mom, Alexis noted, “Coming here meant a certain amount of independence and freedom.” She enrolled as a freshman and said, “It was exactly what I expected it to be—home away from home. I missed my family, of course, but it was easy to adapt because of the support system here.”

Alexis joined the Academic Team and cheerleading her first year. She recalled, “I balanced academics with my activities. It was good to be mentally and physically challenged.” The OBI dormitories were closed for her sophomore year, so she took classes online. This took a toll on her GPA and her emotional health. She reported, “It was terrible. I missed OBI so much, and I could not wait to get back.”

Returning to campus as a junior, Alexis’ grades returned to A’s and B’s, and she tried two new activities—volleyball and tennis. “That was my first time to play volleyball or tennis, and both were awesome! I liked the help and support from my coaches,” she said. She was named to the 49th District All Tournament Volleyball Team and received the 110% Award from her coach.

Alexis had attended church and Christian summer camps when she was younger and found OBI’s Christian environment to be faith-building. “OBI is a safe place to grow. There’s no room for doubt because I’m constantly reminded about God!” she said. Alexis accepted Christ as her Savior during a chapel service at OBI her freshman year.

Alexis plans to study psychology at Campbellsville University. □



Bits & Tidbits

Time to enroll for 2023-24!

If you know of a young person who may like to come to OBI, share this contact information with their family.
Email: admissions@oneidaschool.org
Telephone: 606-847-4111 ext. 233

OBI Homecoming October 21, 2023

It’s not too early to make plans to attend! Share the date with your OBI friends and classmates!

Alumni & Former Students

We want your email address to make it easier to stay in contact! Please email our alumni director:
alumni@oneidaschool.org

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