



ONEIDA MOUNTAINEER

www.oneidaschool.org

A bi-monthly newsletter of Oneida Baptist Institute

September/October 2025

HOMECOMING OCTOBER 18, 2025

*Join us for
Friends, Food & Fun*



Ronnie & Gloria (Moore) Bowling ('77) with their family: **Will Bowling ('01)** in the back, **Tyler and Veronica (Bowling) Gay ('04)** and their children.




Schedule

9:00 AM - Registration
 11:00 AM - Hymn Sing at OBC
 12:00 PM - Lunch in Cafeteria
 1:00 PM - Alumni Recognition

Questions? Email:
alumni@oneidaschool.org
Hope to see you here!

Back-to-School 2025-2026

Fast Facts

- 359 Total Enrollment
- 142 Grades 9-12
- 95 Grades 5-8
- 43 Class of 2026
- 14 Countries Represented in the Dorms
- 68% Local Students
- 4 Bus Routes



Move-in day with the Shiferaw family! Left to right: **Kidus Shiferaw**, OBI Class of 2015, is completing his Doctor of Medicine degree at the University of Kentucky this year. Tenth grader **Robel** is starting his first year at OBI. To the right of their mom and dad is **Matti**, a senior who enrolled at OBI in 2024.

Meet the Principal

We are pleased to announce that **Tammy Mason** is the OBI Principal for the 2025-2026 school year. Mason served as the Lower School Principal last year and will now lead both the Upper and Lower Schools.

Mason holds a Master's degree in Education and a Rank 1 in School Guidance & Educational Leadership. She came to us after retiring from her career in public school where she last served as an administrator at Stevenson Elementary School in Russellville, Ky., Mason's hometown.

Mason was very familiar with OBI having taught here from 1997- 2002. Both of her children graduated from OBI—**Frank Stratton** (OBI '01) and **Tamra Stratton** (OBI '03). When she returned to public school, Mason taught in Franklin County for 5 years, became a School Counselor in Frankfort, Ky., for two years, and then worked in Clarksville, Tn., as an Instructional Coach for 3 years and Assistant Principal for 7 years. She became an elementary



(Mason continued p. 2)

(Mason cont.)

school principal in Todd County before moving back home to Russellville.

Returning to serve at Oneida was not in Mason’s retirement plans. She explained, “I lost my husband unexpectedly. ... He had recently retired, and we had discussed what life would look like if I ever decided to retire. Unfortunately, we never got to experience any of the plans we had made.” Mason completed that school year but decided, “It was time for me to let it go and spend more time with family and friends.”

Mr. Gritton contacted Mason to ask if she would like to serve at OBI. “I just couldn’t get peace about making that decision,” she recalled. “He told me if I changed my mind at any point to let him know,” she added.

Over the next few months, Mason would attend churches in her area when the OBI choir came to visit. She said, “Each time, Mr. Gritton would share different things about the happenings at OBI. We’ve been friends for a long time, so he definitely knew what to say to pull my heart strings!” After more time in prayer and a few more big life changes, Mason believed she got her answer to return to Oneida.

Mason’s leadership philosophy reflects her Christian values. “As a servant leader, my core mission is to serve and support the entire school community—students, parents, teachers and staff. I believe that every decision should be made with students at the center, ensuring their growth, well-being, and success. At the same time, I am deeply committed to empowering educators by providing the resources, encouragement, and environment they need to thrive,” she said.

For the 2025-26 school year, Mason’s top priority is to improve attendance among our local students. She stated, “Students can’t learn if they aren’t in school. My goal is to provide an educational environment where our students want to be.” Working with Assistant Principal, **Matthew Langdon**, Mason added, “Our goal is to be visible and available ... to meet the needs of our students and staff.” □

2025-26 Brad Dorough Friendship Award Winner



Congratulations to OBI senior **Amadeus Martin**, winner of the 2025-26 Brad Dorough Friendship Award. The award was established in 1990 and includes a scholarship to attend OBI the following school year.

Brad Dorough attended OBI in the 7th-9th grades in the mid-1980s. In 1989, Dorough was killed in a car accident. His parents had often heard him express fond memories of his friends at OBI and wanted to establish a scholarship in his honor. Each year, students in grades 6-12 are instructed to vote for a person who made them feel welcome at OBI and who has been sensitive and understanding of the needs of other students.

Amadeus is a Christian from Thailand who enrolled at OBI as a sophomore. He stated, “I wanted to come here to improve my English and to focus on my future. It took about four months to get here, but God helped me a lot!” Besides working on his English, playing soccer is his top priority. He was proud to be a part of the the 2024-25 KHSAA State Semi-Finalist Team, the 13th Regional Championship Team and the Regional All Tournament Team.

Amadeus stated, “When I first came here, I didn’t know what to expect, but I found a community that accepted me and gave me a chance to grow. To me, this award isn’t just about recognition, it’s about the support and memories that come with real friendship. This award means a lot to me, and I will continue to cherish and honor the friendships I’ve been given.” □

Safety First: New Bus Added to the Fleet



OBI Bus Drivers met in the summer for their 8-hour annual update.

Thanks to our generous donors, we were able to meet an important need by purchasing a new school bus. In 2022, we purchased three brand new school buses to replace those that had been purchased in 2008. The new buses had not arrived before all three of the older buses had significant problems around the same time. We have and still use the 34-passenger church bus donated by Kuttawa First Baptist Church that came just in time to help while we scrambled to provide transportation for our local students.

Last year, we expanded the local bus routes we offered from three to four routes using a mid-sized school bus we bought at an auction. Going into this school year, OBI president Larry Gritton, Jr., wanted to make an investment in a new school bus to avoid a problem if the mid-sized bus had problems. Gritton said, “There is no greater responsibility that we have than the safety and protection of our students, and the safest means of transportation is school buses.” By law, we can only pick up children on the roadside in a school bus.

Oneida’s faithful donors make it possible for us to meet the needs of our students and we are grateful. □

Baseball/Softball Field Renovation Underway Thanks to Alumni Donation



Harold "Frosty" Hubbard (left) with two of his Class of 1954 classmates, **Betty Hensley Hibbard** and **Ed Morgan** at Homecoming 2024

A gift of \$100,000 pledged by **Harold "Frosty" Hubbard**, who attended OBI from 1950-1953, made it possible to begin the renovation of the baseball and softball fields. The project will include earthwork, sod, new dugouts and new fencing.

Hubbard attended OBI from the 8th to 11th grades. He recalled, "My first seven grades were in a one-room schoolhouse. It was a pure blessing when I came to Oneida. It was a great environment for me." Needing an advanced math class for college that OBI did not offer, Hub-

bard transferred to Clay County High School for his senior year but stayed connected with his OBI Class of 1954. He noted, "Some of my best friends in the world are from that class."

Hubbard reconnected with several of his OBI classmates at Berea College, where he studied Business Administration. He married and had two sons, completed an MBA at the University of Kentucky, and retired after 50 years of teaching at the University of the Cumberlands.

Hubbard made this gift in honor of **Gilbert "Mutt" Samples**, a veteran and former OBI teacher and basketball coach who was later added to the OBI Athletic Hall of Fame. Hubbard played on the basketball team but said it was Coach Samples' time and attention off the court that made a difference in his life. "He knew I was a boy who didn't have a dad. He talked to me and really took an interest in me. He was a great influence in my whole life," Hubbard said.

When asked about his decision to provide this generous gift to OBI, Hubbard said, "Over the years, I always knew I would do this and decided this was the time to do it." □

Staff Anniversaries



At the annual August staff meeting, we honored **Kurtis Lawson** (OBI '15-left in photo) for his 5 years of service at OBI and **Tim and Tamara Cochran** for their 30 years at OBI.

Lawson serves as a teacher, bus driver and coach. He stated, "My favorite part of serving at OBI is interacting with our students, answering their questions about God, learning their stories and being a mentor to them."

The Cochrans came to OBI from Colorado in 1995. Their children are OBI alumni—Taylor (OBI '14) and Jordan (OBI '16). Tim is a teacher, bus driver and coach. Tamara is the Publications Director and drama teacher. Tim said, "Ministering to students from all around the world, right here in rural Southeastern Kentucky, is my favorite part of teaching at OBI; the diversity of our student body is truly special." □

DG Grant Provided Summer Outing for OBI Students



A \$1,500 grant from the Dollar General Literacy Foundation provided 30 OBI students in grades 2-4 an opportunity to visit Wendt's Wildlife Adventure in Carlisle, Ky., on July 16th. Students enjoyed:

- A wildlife animal show.
- Exploring a cabin once lived in by Daniel Boone.
- Feeding and interacting with animals like sloths, goats, parakeets, turtles, snakes, llamas and more.
- A picnic lunch on the beautiful grounds.



Each student received a copy of "Who was Daniel Boone?" by Sydelle Kramer and "The Fascinating Animal Book with 500 Wild Facts" by Ginjer L. Clarke. They "adopted" a stuffed pet that they named and promised to read to for 15 minutes each day. The Dollar General Literacy Foundation (DGLF) awards funds each year to nonprofit organizations, schools, and libraries to support adult, family, summer and youth literacy programs. □

OBI Choir Fall Schedule

| DATE | LOCATION | TIME |
|-------|--------------------------------------|----------------|
| 10/12 | New Friendship Baptist, Auburn, Ky. | 11:00 AM (CST) |
| 10/12 | Somerset Christian School | 6:30 PM |
| 10/19 | Pleasant Hill Baptist, Somerset, Ky. | 10:30 AM |
| 10/19 | Brodhead Baptist | 7:00 PM |
| 10/26 | Highland Baptist, Shelbyville, Ky. | 10:30 AM |
| 11/2 | Oak Grove Baptist, Monticello, Ky. | 11:00 AM |
| 11/9 | Cumberland, Ky. Missionary Church | 11:00 AM |
| 11/16 | Lytleton Baptist, Manchester, Ky. | 11:15 AM |
| 11/23 | Kuttawa Baptist, Kuttawa, Ky. | 11:00 AM (CST) |
| 12/7 | Bethlehem Baptist, Waco, Ky. | 11:00 AM |

Email: frank.stratton@oneidaschool.org



ONEIDA BAPTIST INSTITUTE
 PO BOX 67
 ONEIDA KENTUCKY 40972-0067
 ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

NON-PROFIT
 ORGANIZATION
 U.S. POSTAGE
 PAID
 Oneida, KY
 Permit No. 4

What Does It Take? OBI's Cost Per Day = \$12,000



What does it take to provide a quality Christian education to over 350 young people? After "God's grace," the short answer is people, facilities and food.

We were blessed with 60 new students this year. That's 60 more boys and girls who have the opportunity to hear the gospel each day while learning life skills, exploring extracurriculars, and receiving the academic support they need to achieve their highest potential. It's also an additional \$100,000 in meals.

On November 20th, we are hosting a *What Does It Take Fundraising Dinner* that will showcase the many ways OBI is making an impact in students' lives. President Gritton will be speaking, and some of our students will be sharing. Anyone who is interested in the work at Oneida is welcome to join us. We are planning to live stream the program and will share the link on the OBI Facebook page.

Also in November, you should receive OBI's annual holiday letter. This Christmas, please prayerfully consider a special gift or becoming a monthly contributor.

If you would like to give electronically, the QR code link to the right will take you to Network for Good (tax ID 68-0480736) where your credit card donation can be securely processed.

Thank you for partnering with us to provide an *Education for Time and Eternity* for today's boys and girls. ☐



Network for Good



In Memoriam

Peggie Ann Sparks
 Class of 1956

Brenda Davidson Jenkens
 Class of 1966

Cashton Warren
 Former Student

Pat Key
 Former Trustee

Bro. Arnold Moon
 Volunteer

Patti Sparks Midkiff
 Former Staff

Denise Roberts
 Former Teacher

Update Your Information

If you have a change of address or would like to be added to our mailing list, please email:
 diane.dimsey@oneidaschool.org
 or call 606-847-4111 ext. 292.