



ONEIDA MOUNTAINEER

www.oneidaschool.org

A bi-monthly newsletter of Oneida Baptist Institute

May/June 2026

Congratulations Class of 2026



The Class of 2026 graduation ceremony was held on May 15th at 1:00 pm in the Melvin Davidson chapel. The class included seven local day students and 35 dormitory residents from Kentucky, Georgia, Maryland, Missouri, Angola, Brazil, Cameroon, China, Ethiopia, Senegal, Taiwan, Thailand, and The Bahamas

Father's Day Offering for Oneida

The Father's Day Offering is one of four annual missions offerings sanctioned by the Kentucky Baptist Convention. We are grateful to our many friends and partners.

I thank my God in all my remembrance of you, always in every prayer of mine for you all making my prayer with joy, because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now.

—Philippians 1:3-5



Spring is when we celebrate student achievement and growth. For the faculty and staff, it's like a year-end bonus to see the fruit of much labor and prayer. Friends and partners, you also share in the success stories, because none of this could happen without you.

Christian education is more important than ever. Oneida's mission of *Education for Time and Eternity* continues with your support. Father's Day is a great time to pray for our graduating seniors and to invest in next year's students.

SENIOR SPOTLIGHTS—Mr. & Miss Oneida



Martin (left) and Conder are both Christians who achieved top honors in academics and activities at OBI.

The Mr. & Miss Oneida awards are given to seniors who have attended OBI for at least two years and are outstanding in character, academics, and citizenship. This year's recipients are **Amadeus Martin** and **Eden Conder**.

Eden excelled in academics and athletics

Eden enrolled at OBI in the fifth grade after her family moved to Oneida, Kentucky from Colorado. The first thing she noticed in her new school was a positive and engaging classroom environment. "The students and teachers here were very open and outgoing," she said.

(Mr. & Miss Oneida continued on p. 2)

(Mr. & Miss Oneida continued)

Soon after enrolling, Eden became a Christian. She explained, "I knew of Jesus but I didn't really understand who He was. The sermons in chapel really helped me to come to that decision."

Eden participated in volleyball, basketball and track and field in grades 9-12. She said, "I enjoy how everyone can join sports at OBI because there are no cuts. I like how coaches are patient and take their time when you are new to something." She was named the MVP and Best Defensive Player in volleyball and received the 2024-2025 Athletic Director's Award.

The valedictorian for the Class of 2026, Eden benefited from honors, advanced and dual credit classes. She was named the Most Outstanding Girl in grades 9-11 and "Miss Oneida" as a senior. She plans to attend Asbury University to major in political science, her first step toward a law degree. □



Eden was the volleyball team captain.

Amadeus thrived in caring community

Amadeus enrolled at OBI as a sophomore from Thailand. "I wanted to come here to improve my English and to focus on my future," he said. He struggled through the student visa process and recalled, "It took about four months to get here, but God helped me a lot! I prayed every day before I came here. The first week when I got here, I was so happy! My parents missed me, but they were proud of me."

Next to becoming fluent in English, playing soccer was his top priority. "Soccer has been a huge part of my time here. It's pushed me to work harder, stay disciplined and build strong connections with my teammates," he said. He was proud to be a part of the 13th Region Championship Team and All Tournament Team in 2024 and 2025 and the State Semi-Final team in 2024.



Amadeus was a key player in OBI's regional soccer championships.

At the end of his junior year, Amadeus received OBI's student-voted Brad Dorough Friendship Award. He 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, OBI isn't just a school, it's a family."

Amadeus was the recipient of the William A. Evans award, OBI's top graduation honor. He said, "OBI is where I learned to trust God more and to rely on Him through challenges. It also taught me responsibility and independence, which will help me for the rest of my life." □

Wyatt found support in smaller classes



Wyatt began attending OBI in the third grade, the first year that we offered bus transportation for local students. His parents wanted him to attend OBI because it was a Christian school. He added, "Here at OBI, everybody's more positive with each other."

As he got older, he appreciated the smaller classes and help from his teachers. "OBI is a good school with a lot of good teachers. If you pay attention in class, it's easy to get good grades. I've had a lot of support, especially in math. The way my teacher explained stuff made it easy to remember," he said. Wyatt said it was the people at OBI that kept him coming back year after year. "Everyone is nice," he added.

An interesting fact about Wyatt is that he lost over 140 pounds starting the summer before his junior year. He stated, "I used to be 335 pounds." His secret? "I fell in love with lifting [weights], and I studied the science behind food. I cut out the sugar and the binge eating," he said. He joined the track and field team his junior and senior years.

Wyatt received a President's Award at graduation. He plans to obtain his CDL this summer and enroll in a trade school to become a lineman. He said, "It's the kind of job that will keep me moving around." □

Michael grew as a leader in athletics

Michael came to America from The Bahamas in 2024 to finish high school and have the chance to play basketball. He started out at another private school in Kentucky but transferred to OBI for his senior year when his other school closed its dormitories.



Michael appreciated how the houseparents here made him feel welcome. "They were like my second parents. I could go to them when I needed to talk, and they always gave good advice," he said.

Michael enjoyed three seasons of sports this year starting with cross country and ending with track and field. In basketball, he was a starter and was named to the "All A" All Tournament team. He said, "I had fun, and I learned a lot of new skills. The coaching staff was great. They challenged me to push myself and be a leader."

Michael was the recipient of the 2025-26 Athletic Director's Award and a President's Award at graduation. He plans to attend Eastern Kentucky University in the fall. □

Matti continued a family tradition



Following in his older brother’s footsteps, Matti enrolled at OBI as a junior from Dubai. “My brother went here back in 2013-2015. He always talked to us about how OBI changed his life, how he came here and found Jesus,” Matti said.

Since Matti was planning to attend college in the U.S., it made sense for him to come for high school. He was nervous about leaving home but said, “My family prayed about it and then my mind was set to go. Now, I think it was God’s will for me to be here. I feel very privileged and honored that I could come.”

His brother, Kidus, had attended before the new boys’ dormitory was built. “The dorm was much nicer than I expected,” Matti said. He also enjoyed wifi in the dorm, a very recent perk. He had no trouble making friends saying, “I’m outgoing, and it’s easy for me to get to know people.” Joining the soccer team at the start of school gave him connections that led to close friendships all year.

Attending a Christian school allowed him to focus on his faith. He stated, “I was raised Christian, but I had been slipping in my spiritual life. Coming to OBI was like a reset for me. Chapel is a huge factor in how I got closer to God. A 20-minute sermon may not seem long, but 20 minutes with the word of God, if you really listen, pray and infuse it, can be huge in your life.”

Matti’s younger brother, Robel, enrolled at OBI last August, 2025 as a sophomore. Matti said, “It was nice that he could come and to have family here.” Matti plans to attend the University of Kentucky, where Kidus recently graduated from medical school, to study AI Engineering. He plans to make several visits to OBI next year to watch Robel play soccer. □

Paige’s journey led her to her family and to Christ



Paige was seven years old when she and two of her siblings went to live in Oneida with their third set of foster parents, **Frank and Whitney Stratton**. Paige’s youngest sister joined them a couple of years later. The Strattons were on staff at OBI and were enrolled in the foster-to-adopt program with Sunrise Children’s Services. Paige recalled, “We were treated the way kids were supposed to be treated—we were loved and taken care of.”

She was about nine years old when her family moved to western Kentucky where her dad pastored Park City Baptist Church. It was in this community that Paige grew up, made friends and celebrated milestones like the adoption of all four siblings in January, 2018. Paige recalled, “I was over-the-moon with joy to know that I had found my forever family!” An even bigger milestone for Paige was accepting Christ in March, 2018 and being baptized by her dad.

Paige was a sophomore when her parents returned to serve at OBI. Paige was sad about leaving home, but when school started, she began to see Oneida through an academic lens. “I’ve always struggled in school. Here, the classes were smaller, and I could get one-on-one help from my teachers,” she said. Activities like volleyball, cheerleading, yearbook and choir helped her to make friends.

Paige plans to attend the University of the Cumberland to major in elementary education. □

Hallie served with a smile at OBI



Hallie is a local student from Manchester, Kentucky who enrolled three years ago along with her younger brother, Cayson, a 7th grader at the time. “I came and toured the school with my brother and really liked it. I decided to give it a try,” she said.

A Christian since age 13, Hallie said, “It was helpful to be with good Christian people my age. Chapel was a great opportunity to reset my mind and my attitude for the day. I really enjoyed it.”

In her Career Exploration elective class, she worked as a teacher’s aid in the elementary school, an office aid and an administrative assistant. She was a member of the OBI choir, the yearbook editor and a bus monitor. She started the “Smile Club” her junior year and led the group in various community service projects. “I love to stay busy, and I love to help people,” she said.

The salutatorian for the Class of 2026, Hallie described how she maintained top grades with a busy schedule. “It’s all about prioritizing and being intentional. For me, academics come before anything,” she said. Hallie was inducted into the National Honor Society, took several dual credit classes and is the recipient of the 2025-2026 Bert T. Combs scholarship. At graduation, she received OBI’s John Michael Davis Citizenship Award.

Hallie plans to enroll in the nursing program at the University of the Cumberland. She reflected, “My biggest regret about OBI is not coming sooner.” □

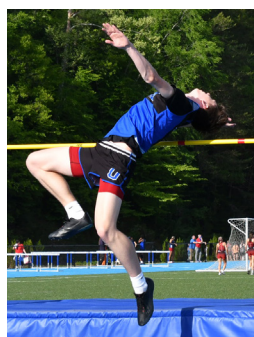
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Athletic Achievements



The above OBI Track and Field athletes earned regional medals, and nine who placed 1st, 2nd or "At Large" in their events advanced to the state track meet in May.



Junior **Tommy Branstutter** broke the regional meet record with a jump of 6'5" and became the Region 5 High Jump Champion. He placed third in the state with a jump that cleared 6'.



OBI freshman **Isaac Cho** advanced to the state tennis tournament as a 13th Region Tennis Singles Semi-Finalist. After a 6-2, 6-1 win in the first round of state, Cho was defeated in round two.



On May 6th, **Dr. David Price**, OBI Campus Minister, baptized nine students who made professions of faith this year.



(Seated L-R) **Jonathan Fan**, **Henrique Gabardo**, and **Klahan Khajohnsupawatchara** signed letters of intent to play soccer for Johnson University. They were joined by their OBI coaches and their future Johnson University coaches.



Signing their letters—**Eden Conder** (left) is joining the Track and Field team at Asbury University. **Pietro Lee** will be playing soccer for Alice Lloyd College next fall.



**OBI Homecoming
October 17, 2026**

In Memoriam

Eugene Arnett
Class of 1950

Lois Fermon Pryor
Class of 1960

Lester Smith
Class of 1974