



Back to School In Person

The people we talk to always want to know how OBI is doing during the pandemic. So we thought we would answer some questions you may be having. Responses from **Connie Belcher**, Assistant Principal:

Q: How many dorm students do we have, and how many local students?

A: At this writing, we have 38 dorm students and 141 local students.

Q: What percentage of the dorm students are international?

A: 58% international and 42% domestic

Q: What percentage of our student body are new students?

A: 40% are new this year, with 60% returning

Q: How did we decide who we would enroll this year in the dorms?

A: Anyone who wanted to come could apply. We had to make sure that each of the students in the dorms had the maturity and could be independent enough to work on their own if we had to be quarantined. We did not turn anyone away for lack of room. We were not able to get many new internationals due to backups at the embassies in their countries. Many of them had a waiting list of 200 to 300 days.

Q: What precautions are we taking to protect our students, faculty, and support staff from COVID-19?

A: Students, faculty and staff wear masks when indoors during school. Food service staff serve the food at meals rather than our pre-COVID serve-yourself style. Teachers are cleaning all student surfaces between classes and at the end of the school day, while implementing social distancing in the classroom and in chapel. Only two students at a time are allowed in the restroom. Students are asked to bring their own water bottles.

Please pray for the health and safety of our students, faculty and support staff. ☐



Little kids and big kids alike enjoyed the brand, new playground when the Lower School celebrated "Special Friends Day." Grandparents and other special friends visited the children in grades K-5 for an afternoon.

Keeping a Promise After 50 Years



This past summer, on July 29, **John Newton** fulfilled a promise he made 50 years before to his former Peace Corps friend **Barkley Moore**, the legendary ninth President of Oneida Baptist Institute. Newton finally visited Moore's beloved school and spent three days swapping "Barkley stories" with OBI staff members who had worked with Dr. Moore before his tragic death in 1994.

In the spring of 1964, Newton joined the Peace Corps. He taught English at Mashad University in Iran until his tour ended in 1966, and the Peace Corps asked him to return to Iran as a Field Officer. One of Newton's assignments was the city of Gonbad Kavous, and

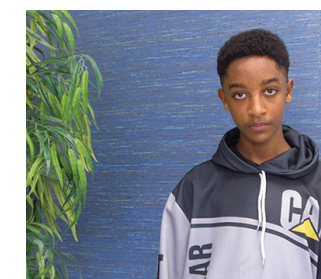
one of his volunteers was 1958 OBI graduate Barkley Moore.

Newton well remembers his first meeting with Moore. He had traveled all day and it was dark when he arrived. He saw four men talking and asked in Persian, "Where can I find Barkley Moore?" A young, dark-haired, slender man replied, also in Persian, "I am Barkley Moore." Newton likened it to the famous meeting between Henry Morton Stanley and Dr. David Livingstone. This was the beginning of a close friendship that would span decades.

Newton recalled the times when Moore shared his progress report. Moore talked late into the night, regardless of how exhausted

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Meet Some of our Award Winners



Leul Enquanhone

Most Studious Eighth Grader

Last spring, Leul Enquanhone was recognized as our Most Studious Eighth-Grader. Leul is from Dubai. He enrolled in OBI as a seventh-grader.

Leul had some setbacks and repeated fourth grade. He switched schools, and went from a British curriculum to a U.S. one, and it took a while for his grades to catch up. Leul was making averages in the 70's and 80's when he came to Oneida.

When we closed our dorms, Leul went back to Dubai and studied with us online. He thrived with distance learning. He said it was easier to keep up with his assignments. "I could read something and then complete the assignments right away," he explained. "It was like teaching myself." Leul also said he had extra help online from OBI teacher, **Ms. Emily Kelley**. Congratulations, Leul! ☐

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35 Years of Service and Still Giving



The 2020 Oneidian yearbook was dedicated to Miss Harmon. She said, "I was really surprised and honored to be chosen."

Martha Harmon was honored in August for her 35 years of OBI ministry as a long-time tutor..

Lower School teacher, **Angela Wolf**, stated, "Miss Harmon finds joy in serving the students both academically and socially. She has a way about helping students succeed using different teaching methods. Her love for laughter and fun is shown as she participates in spirit days with the kids. She truly is a light that shines bright through her teaching and enjoys spending time with the students."

Congratulations, Miss Harmon! ☐

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Navaeh Ruprich-Couch

Most Improved Seventh Grader



OBI for six years. Navaeh said she was definitely surprised to receive this award. When asked why she might have gotten it, she replied, "Probably because I'm kind to people. I show students and teachers respect." This has not always been the case. There was a time when, "my behavior was not very good," she remembered. "Then I said, 'I'm going to give it my all.' I motivated myself by setting standards for myself. If I improved for so many days, I would reward myself."

Navaeh has goals: "I want to be an all-A student, and a very good athlete and a very good friend." Also, she hopes to be a cheerleader. What advice does Navaeh have for other students? "Listen to the teachers. Do your best at everything you do." ☐

Navaeh Ruprich-Couch was named Most Improved Seventh-Grader in the spring. One of our local students, she has been at

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Newton was. John would at last fall asleep on his sleeping bag, and usually woke just in time to see Barkley dashing off to teach a class.

After Newton returned to the U.S. he continued to encourage Moore. This was the beginning of a letter Moore wrote Newton in October, 1970: "Dear John, Your letter arrived during my last week in God-bad Kavous. I never received a more beautiful letter in all of my life...I will never cease to be grateful for the hours we had together...Your optimism and encouraging words were always a tonic to me, and encouraged me on to greater endeavors..."

Barkley's lifelong endeavor was leading Oneida Baptist Institute. His correspondence with Newton continued, and Moore often urged Newton to come and visit his school in the Kentucky mountains. But Newton was living in Alexandria, Virginia by then, working, married, and raising a family. The visit never happened, and Moore died suddenly in 1994.

"I keep hoping you and your family will visit," Barkley wrote John on December 31, 1992. "You would find Oneida exciting." Twenty-nine years later, Newton finally made that long-anticipated visit and discovered that OBI was everything Barkley had described...and more. His goal for the visit was to talk to OBI faculty/staff who knew Moore. OBI President, **Larry A. Gritton, Jr.** (OBI '93) took Newton on a tour of the campus and shared some of his own

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Dear OBI Alumni, Former Students, and Friends,

It is with regret that I announce the cancellation of our October 23 Homecoming. While I would love to hold a large gathering of our Oneida family, I also must consider what is best for current OBI students and staff. I look forward to the day when COVID-19 is behind us, and we can safely gather once again.

In the meantime, stay safe, take care of those you love, and please keep the ministry of OBI in your prayers as we work diligently to continue educating young people For Time And Eternity. May God bless all of our OBI friends.



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Moore memories. A special treat was meeting Barkley's sister, **Gloria Moore Bowling** (OBI '77) (pictured on page 1 with Newton) and her family. "How delighted I was to meet them!" Newton said.

After leaving the Peace Corps, Newton was hired by Time, Inc. in 1975 to help establish a Persian Language educational publishing company in Tehran. While there, he experienced the 1979 Revolution, and he has written a book about his adventures expected to be published in 2022.

Moore had a profound impact on Newton's life. "Barkley never proselytized; he simply acted and his actions spoke volumes," Newton explained. "He was always serving others, always loving his neighbor more than himself. It was a blessing to know him. If ever there were a person to exemplify OBI's motto of "Education For Time And Eternity" it was Barkley.

When interviewed in 1971 for an article about Moore published in *The National Observer*, Newton said, "When you meet a guy like Barkley, it makes you realize that there really is a Supreme Being, a force for good in the world. There's got to be somebody who could create a person like him. You can't believe in nothing when you are around Barkley." ☐

Lower School Expands

For the last five years, our Lower School has been expanding, going from 20-25 children in 2015 to 58 in k-4 through sixth grade this year. Since we only take dormitory students in grade seven or above, all of our Lower School youngsters were in kindergarten through sixth grade. We lengthened one of the three bus routes to accommodate bigger numbers. One-half to two-thirds of our Lower School children ride the bus.

The Lower School used to be housed in the Gritton Gym. Now it is in The Colvin Center, which includes a brand, new playground. (See picture and caption on page 4)

Our new k-4 is a preschool for four-year-olds. "We have had people asking for years if we offer a preschool k-4 program like the public schools have," said **Jennifer Monday**, School Counselor. "This past summer, I was given the OK to explore it as an option. The response was great! We ended up having to tell people that we were full. We didn't even advertise it; it was all word of mouth. I offered it first to our families that had children already here."

President **Larry A. Gritton, Jr.** ('93) stated, "A return to OBI's roots, which includes elementary age students from our local community, brings me and also our entire campus great joy. Any time I need my spirit boosted, all I have to do is go and spend about 30 seconds around our lower school students. Just as Jesus said in Matthew 19:14, we are letting the children come." ☐



Bits and tidbits

Our mission statement

The mission of Oneida Baptist Institute is to provide a Christian living, learning and working environment in which each of its students, Christian or non-Christian, is diligently challenged to grow mentally, physically, socially and spiritually in order to acquire an *Education for Time and Eternity*.

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