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ONEIDA MOUNTAINEER

Education for Time and Eternity

A bi-monthly newsletter of Oneida Baptist Institute

May/June 2020



Dear Partners in the Gospel,

Our world has certainly been flipped upside down in the past few months, but God is good and is clearly at work during this unusual time. Like most all ministries and businesses, this pandemic has impacted OBI in unprecedented ways and some difficult decisions regarding the OBI ministry have been made. The remainder of our traditional school year was cancelled and our students finished their coursework online. There were some challenges, but our teachers and students adapted wonderfully. We are still holding out hope to have a traditional, in-person graduation ceremony sometime this fall. We suspended the construction of Underwood Hall, our new dining hall, but hope to resume the project when the time is right. We have worked to find financial savings in every way possible. We cancelled our volunteer season. Some difficult decisions regarding our staff have also been made. None of these decisions were easy to make, but I am grateful for the Lord's direction and provision.

We will, of course, follow mandates set forth by our Governor and local and national health officials, but we are planning to open the 2020-21 school year on August 10. I anticipate the student body will consist of mostly day students and limited boarding students, but we will do our very best to provide an *Education for Time and Eternity* for all students the Lord sends our way.

Many have asked how they can help Oneida during this time. Please pray for us and if the Lord leads you to do so please give monetarily. The fervent prayers and sacrificial giving of faithful people have sustained the work of OBI for 120 years. The Lord has met Oneida's every need through some difficult days and we are grateful for your role in Him doing just that once again.

It is a tremendous privilege to be a part of this amazing ministry and it is incredibly humbling to lead this ministry. Thank you for your love and support and may the Lord bless each of you with health, grace, peace, and prosperity.

Would you like to contact us?

www.oneidaschool.org
telephone: 606-847-4111

With a Grateful Heart,
Larry A. Gritton, Jr., President

Meet some of our 2020 graduates

Oneida was life-changing for Hope



Hope was struggling in a difficult family situation in central Kentucky. Adopted by their paternal grandparents, Hope and her brother had sporadic contact with their mother and stepfather and no contact with their father. Hope began getting into trouble at school and said, "I was rebelling against my family and failing all of my classes. I just kind of stopped caring. ... My [grandmother] brought me to Oneida to get away from all that."

A junior when she enrolled, Hope admitted that she purposely did the "bare minimum" at OBI and refused to socialize. One evening at supper, the cheerleading coach approached her. "She looked at me and said, 'You'd make a good base. I'll see you at practice!' I was tired of sitting around alone, so I went. I met friends, and that's when I figured out that I liked it here."

(Hope continued p. 2)

(Hope continued)

She went on to join choir, softball and golf. She was named the Most Improved Golfer and earned athletic letters in cheerleading and softball. She made the honor roll and received an academic award. After emerging from her dorm room, Hope said, "I didn't want to be like that anymore, so I decided to change."

While Hope was making improvements in her social life, God was working on her heart. Before coming to Oneida, she said, "We went to church every Sunday, but I didn't really listen to anything they had to say." Daily chapel services at OBI offered something different. "I really liked everyone's testimonies," she said. After much discussion with her grandmother, she gave her life to Christ and was baptized at her home church the day before she returned to OBI to begin her senior year. She said, "I felt like a completely different person after that."

Reflecting on her two years at Oneida, Hope said, "It was good, because I wouldn't be the person I am now, and I wouldn't be following the Lord if I had not come here. Sometimes we need a life-changing event to realize we need help."

Hope would like to work for Ameri-corps after graduation. She said, "I want to work with kids and help people."

Ways Kentucky Baptists Can Support Oneida during 2020

- **Pray** for OBI and its students. *James 5:16 "...The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much."*
- **Give** as you are led. The backbone of our financial support—65%—comes from individuals, churches and other sources.
- **Share** the Oneida story with families who may need our ministry. You can direct people to our website: www.oneidaschool.org



Emerald grew in faith and friendships



From Pennsylvania, Emerald enrolled at OBI in the seventh grade. Family members had attended Oneida many years ago. He reflected on what brought him to OBI: "I think my mom needed somewhere for me to go until she was more stable. We had moved around a lot. At first I thought, 'Why am I coming here?' But I realized the reason was to help my mom. It was hard, though."

Emerald described himself as very social which eased his transition to boarding school. He added, "The first thing that I noticed about Oneida was that it was very di-

verse. I met a lot of people from all over the world!" He agreed that Oneida friendships are unique. "You eventually form a bond with the friends you make here. You become like brothers and sisters in a way," he said.

Room chores and after school jobs and activities were easy for Emerald who commented, "My mom taught me that cleaning and working is all part of life, so I was used to that." He worked as a supervisor of cleaning crews earning Outstanding Worker awards. He also participated in basketball and track and field.

Baptized in the fifth grade, Emerald said, "I became a Christian at a very young age, but I kind of fell off. At Oneida, I felt my faith coming back and getting stronger. Now, I tend to talk to God a lot." He added, "I looked forward to going to chapel. Sometimes, I felt like they were talking to me directly."

Looking forward to graduation, Emerald said with a smile, "Whatever I do, it's going to be big!"

Erica got the support she needed for success



Sisters, tennis doubles partners and top scholars **Erin Metzger '19** (left) and **Erica Metzger '20**

Erica is the second of four children who were home-schooled until 2014 when they enrolled at OBI as day students. Their father, an OBI alum, wanted them to experience OBI's Christian environment and extracurriculars.

As a sixth grader, Erica needed academic support. She recalled, "I wasn't really great at math and reading, so they put me in the tutoring lab. It helped me a lot." She needed one-on-one attention in other classes, too. Erica explained, "I used to not want to

work. My sixth grade teacher at OBI instilled a work ethic in me."

Beginning in the 7th grade, Erica became a straight A student. In high school, she enrolled in honors and dual credit classes. The OBI faculty voted Erica the Most Studious and Most Outstanding girl in her class in grades 9-11. "We're not just a number here; the teachers actually get to know you," she said. Erica graduated as the Salutatorian of the Class of 2020.

Erica was active in sports at OBI beginning in the sixth grade. In high school, she earned her varsity letter jacket and qualified for the state tennis tournament and the Class A state golf tournament. Outside of school, Erica is active in her home church and has worked as a counselor at Youth Haven Bible Camp.

Beginning a nursing program this fall, Erica said, "Hopefully I can come back to Clay County to serve the people here. I've grown up here, and I see a need."

Anna blossomed into her full potential



Adopted from China at age seven, Anna grew up with her family in North Carolina. She began having problems at her previous school and said, "I was bullied a lot about my race." Her grades had dropped, and Anna's counselor recommended boarding school. "She told me her son went to boarding school, and it changed his life. I wanted to change my life, too!" Anna said.

Anna had been to church a few times, but during her first semester at OBI, she became very curious about God and asked many questions. She said, "I wanted to go to heaven, so I wanted to get saved, but I didn't know how or when to do it." Two of her friends led her in prayer. "I got saved, and I got happy!" she smiled. When she made the honor roll as a freshman, she recalled, "I was so happy, and my parents were happy, too!"

With her academics in hand, she explored after school activities including drama and track and field. She worked on the farm and participated in FFA and livestock showing all four years of high school. She said, "I liked how the farm did a devotional every day, and we prayed before we went to work. Also, if you didn't understand how to do something they would help you. At OBI, they will never give up on you and they will help you succeed."

Anna plans to use her livestock showing skills at a job as a pet groomer after graduation. Anna said she will miss her OBI farm friends. "Once you work there a lot it's like a family, and I will miss seeing them and sharing all the laughter we had."

Frank found a fresh outlook, God's beauty



Frank grew up in an urban city in western Kentucky. The oldest of four children, Frank said that he and his single mother were having frequent and heated conflicts. "I was a hard headed kid. ... I was hanging around people [who] didn't care about anything. I was always disrespecting and lying to my mom. I was slacking at school," he said. Friends from church recommended OBI.

Agreeing that he needed a change did not mean that Frank was excited to attend OBI his sophomore year. The longer he was here, the more his outlook changed. "The people here are so friendly. You find a lot of hard-working people here, and it changes your whole mentality. It motivates you," he said. With extra help from teachers, Frank started passing his classes. "I cared more about my studies here; I actually learned," he said.

Even Oneida's rural setting made a positive impression. "I could look around and see the fields and the flowers and appreciate God's beauty. By the end of the year, I wanted to come back to OBI," he said.

His junior year, Frank enrolled in welding class at the OBI farm. The following summer at home, he applied for a job at a diesel engine repair shop. He recalled, "At first, they didn't want me but I told them I knew how to weld because I learned it at OBI." After demonstrating his skills, Frank said he was hired. He plans to obtain his certification in welding and is considering military service.

When he first came to OBI, his goal was to return home as quickly as possible. Now, Frank has advice for younger students: "Get involved and talk to people here, because you will find people with a similar situation to you."

Anne appreciated college prep support



A first-year international student from Tanzania, Anne said, "It's only by the grace of God that I'm here, so I am really grateful." Her older brother graduated from OBI in 2015, but circumstances had changed for her family when it came time for Anne to consider studying abroad. Between a promotion for her father and a family friend helping with the airline ticket, Anne was able pursue her educational goals. "God just opened the door! Life at home is hard. I have better university options in America which will help me make a strong foundation for my future," Anne said.

Anne comes from a strong Christian family and appreciated daily chapel services at Oneida. "It helped to build my relationship with God. Dr. Price talked to us in a way that was relatable. He always had stories! It was fun to listen and not boring!" she said.

Anne observed that the ministry of Oneida extended outside of the chapel service. She explained, "The real action is what happens in the dorm. I saw houseparents talking to students all the time, to help them with hygiene or to confront them about their behavior. The houseparents train you to put the words you hear in chapel into practice."

At Oneida, Anne has appreciated the support she has received with her college application process this year. She said, "At my old school ... looking for scholarships, applying to colleges ... you have to do that all on your own," she explained. She plans to remain in Kentucky for college and major in social work or business.

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Michael gained friends, work skills at OBI



Michael lives just five minutes from campus, so it was an easy choice to attend OBI beginning in the seventh grade. "A bunch of my friends were coming here, too," he added.

Michael grew up going to Sunday School in his local church. He said, "We more or less learned the Old Testament." In his middle school Bible class at OBI, he learned more about the New Testament. His Bible teacher was also his history teacher and Michael recalled, "He was different than other teachers. He was always kind of energetic." Michael's middle school teachers voted him the Most

Studious 7th Grade Boy and the Most Outstanding 8th Grade Boy.

Attending daily chapel throughout middle and high school helped to keep Michael grounded in his faith. He said, "Chapel is a pretty good thing. It's a refresher if you've heard some of it before. The staff testimonies let you know a little bit more about some of the staff working here than they would normally tell you about. Chapel gives you a time to rest where you aren't having to write anything down."

In his free time at home, Michael helps out on his family's sweet potato farm. "We raise a little of everything, but sweet potatoes are the biggest thing," he explained. At OBI, Michael took a couple of agriculture classes, including small engine repair, as electives. For the past three summers, he has worked in the area of maintenance at a U.S. Forest Service ranger station not far from Oneida in the Daniel Boone National Forest. After graduation, Michael plans to continue this job part time while attending Somerset Community College to study electrical technology. When asked what kept him returning to OBI through his senior year, Michael replied, "I made a lot of new friends here."

Bits & Tidbits

- Mark your calendar for Homecoming on October 17, 2020.
- Registration for the 2019-2020 school year is now open. Local students attend FREE! E-mail: admissions@oneidaschool.org or call: 606-847-4111, x233
- **FIRST DAY OF SCHOOL:
AUGUST 10, 2020**
- We are planning an in-person graduation ceremony for the Class of 2020 on September 5, 2020.
- Follow us on Facebook:
<https://www.facebook.com/OBI.KY/>