



Founded in 1899

VOL. 96, NO. 3

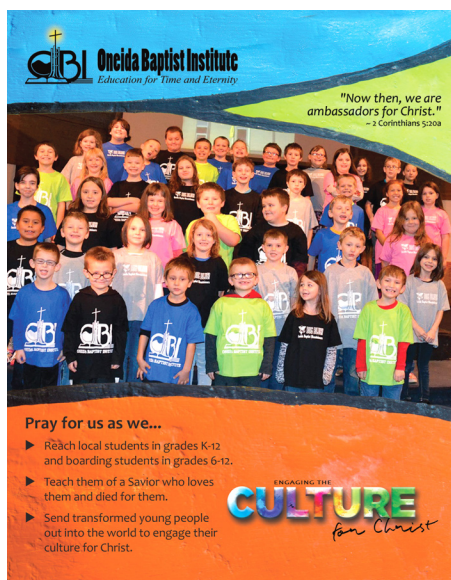
# ONEIDA MOUNTAINEER

Education for Time and Eternity

A bi-monthly newsletter of Oneida Baptist Institute

May/June 2019

## 23rd Annual Father's Day Offering



*Father's Day is a great reminder to pray for OBI and our students, especially our recent graduates. This is the 23rd year for the Kentucky Baptist Convention Father's Day Offering for Oneida. The following letter from OBI president, Larry A. Gritton, Jr., was included in the June issue of the Western Recorder.*

### Ways Kentucky Baptists Can Support the Father's Day Offering

1. **Inquire** if your church received a box from OBI.
2. **Offer** to order materials if needed by telephoning: 606-847-4111.
3. **Ask** if the fliers may be displayed even if the church does not promote the offering.
4. **Pray** for OBI.



Dear Partners in the Gospel,

Your church should have recently received a box of materials from us. That box contains items for the KBC's Father's Day Offering for Oneida Baptist Institute and is vitally important to the Lord's ongoing work here in Oneida. If you love Oneida, and I know so many of you do, please help to make these materials available to your church family. Our ministry relies heavily upon giving from Kentucky Baptist churches and we are forever grateful to each of you. We remain steadfast in our covenant agreement and partnership with the Kentucky Baptist Convention. Without the support of Kentucky Baptists there would be no Oneida Baptist Institute.

The theme of the materials in the box is "Engaging the Culture for Christ" and is based on 2 Corinthians 5:20a which says, "We are therefore Christ's ambassadors." Your love and support help us to offer Jesus to our students on a daily basis. Your love, prayers, and support enable us to allow children to come to our campus, even if their family can't afford it. Your support enables the disciples we have made to go their home lands and take Jesus with them to share with others. Your generosity helps us educate students for time and eternity.

Thank you for helping us offer hope and a future to young people from across our county, state, country, and world.

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

## Meet some of our 2019 graduates

### Makyla learned life lessons in sports



Makyla and her two younger siblings began attending OBI "the first year they ran the bus," she said. OBI began bus routes for day students in 2015. Makyla was in the ninth grade. Though it meant leaving some friends behind, Makyla agreed to try OBI. "My dad really wanted us to come here. He really liked the school," she said.

Makyla had spent her youth involved in sports. She appreciated OBI's no-cut policy for sports but became frustrated with the inexperienced softball team. "That first year we lost literally every game. It was tough for me, because I had been used to winning at least half my games. My parents helped me to understand that a lot of people [at OBI] never had the opportunity to be in sports before. There is a verse in Colossians that says whatever you do, do it as unto the Lord. My  
(Makyla continued p. 2)

*(Makyla continued)*

mom would tell me that every single day! Now, I understand that winning is not the only reason you play. It's about doing what you think is right and doing your best," she said.

By her senior year, Makyla was named Captain of each of her sports—soccer, basketball and softball. At OBI, experienced players help to train those who are new to the sport. Makyla noted, "Here, you help your peers. I had to learn how to do that in a positive way." She was named to the All Tournament basketball team and received the Most Coachable award in track, the Most Improved Newcomer award in soccer and the Most Versatile award in softball.

Makyla noticed that compared to other schools, athletes at OBI pay very little to participate in our sports program. Since most of the students live on campus, they do not have to worry about transportation. She reflected, "Until I came here, I never really appreciated that there were a lot of people that didn't have the opportunity to do sports because of money. At OBI, ... there's a lot more variety of people who can be involved."

Diversity is one of Makyla's favorite things about Oneida. She explained, "Living in Clay County, you don't really see a lot of diversity. Here, I got to learn so much about different cultures and different people. ... I recommend this school all the time to my [Clay County] friends. I really do love it here!"

Even as a year-round athlete, Makyla was a straight-A student, who completed four dual credit and four advanced placement classes and was the Class of 2019 Salutatorian. She was named the Most Outstanding and Most Studious freshman and sophomore girl and received the University of Kentucky's Rising Scholar award. Makyla will be attending the University of Pikeville on a full academic scholarship to study nursing. She said, "I've always wanted to do something in the medical field."

**Would you like to contact us?**

[www.oneidaschool.org](http://www.oneidaschool.org)  
telephone: 606-847-4111

## Tristan gained skills in reading and farming



A day student from Oneida, Tristan attended public school in grades K-6. He said, "My mom knew I had reading problems, so she made me come to OBI so I could get help." His first day at OBI, Tristan sat down to a reading test with OBI tutors. He recalled, "I couldn't read it. I just sat there for a while so they would think I was reading it, and then I guessed on the answers." The tutors concluded that Tristan was reading at a second grade level. "They started me from the beginning and built a foundation," he said.

Tristan spent most of his school day with the tutors who navigated his avoidance tactics. He explained, "I'm a professional procrastinator. I used to get my teachers talking about something else so ... I wouldn't have to do my work. They got wise to me! They would get the timer out and however many minutes I wanted to talk, that's how long I would stay after school!" The faculty voted Tristan the Most Studious 7th Grade Boy and the Most Outstanding 8th Grade Boy. "[My OBI tutors] taught me how to read and write. I don't know where I'd be without them. They've taught me a lot of things that I'll carry with me the rest of my life," Tristan said.

Growing up on a farm, Tristan said, "I've been feeding cattle since I could pick up a bucket!" He took agriculture classes at OBI beginning in the eighth grade and applied many new techniques to his farm at home. He stated, "The way I grew up, farming was more of a hobby. Mr. Bevil taught me that I can take what I've got and make it better, more efficient."

Tristan described daily chapel at OBI as "my favorite time of the day! ... I heard all the good messages and life lessons. It's like farming; there's a way you can do things that make it easier and better. The Bible tells you how to do it and saves you a lot of trouble."

After graduation, Tristan plans to expand his family's farm. He stated, "Right now, we're running about 50 head of cattle. I want to increase that to about 200-300, but I may have to move out West. That would be my dream!"

## Oneida was a safe haven in Zelalai's education



Zelalai enrolled at OBI as a freshman from China. Her family are Uyghur, a mostly Muslim ethnic minority in the Xinjiang region. The opportunity to come to the U.S. as a student meant that Zelalai could focus on her education away from an area with growing political tension. She learned about OBI through an international student agency.

Zelalai appreciated the individual help of her OBI teachers as she learned English. Despite a language barrier, she learned how to do her morning room chores and her afternoon tasks in the kitchen. She earned an

Outstanding Worker award her first year. "I like this work! Before, in China, I never made my bed. I never washed my clothes; just my mom did it. I'm grown now! I need to start this!" she laughed. When she became eligible to play sports, she joined golf, basketball, cheerleading and softball.

Zelalai's last visit home was in 2016. She will not risk another trip before college in case she would not be allowed to return. She received a scholarship to Campbellsville University where she would like to study business or design. Reflecting on her time at Oneida, Zelalai said, "I think this school is good. I made friends here, and I joined sports."



## AnnaGrace enjoyed more opportunities at OBI



AnnaGrace was nine years old when her family moved from Ohio so that her parents could oversee the Kentucky Mountain Missions Youth Center in Clay County. AnnaGrace and her older brother, Clay, helped in the ministry and were home-schooled. Hearing about OBI at church, they thought it sounded like a good opportunity. AnnaGrace said, "Clay came first, and he liked it, so I thought I'd try it." She enrolled at OBI as an eighth grader.

They met the OBI bus a few miles from their house until their parents joined the OBI staff in 2014, and they moved into staff housing. AnnaGrace said, "I liked being able to see my parents at school every day." Her favorite part about OBI was the student body. "I liked the experience of getting to meet new people from all over [and] being able to have class with other kids. The people you get to know are more like your family," she said. She joined soccer and swimming and earned a varsity athletic letter jacket. In swimming, she earned competition medals and the Best Teammate and Longevity awards. She also joined the OBI yearbook staff.

Daily chapel services provided a daily reminder of her faith. AnnaGrace said, "I liked the fact that we worshipped and heard about God every day. It's nice to be able to do that. It helped me grow more with Him." In her senior Bible class, she noted, "It was nice to hear kids that don't really come from a Christian home asking questions and wanting to know more."

AnnaGrace benefited from one-on-one help at OBI. Her first couple of years, she recalled, "My grades were awful. I just wasn't trying." She had difficulty focusing which made reading a struggle. She met with a tutor for one period a day, and her grades improved to A's, B's and C's. She said, "I started actually trying. I loved homeschooling, but I'm really glad I came here." After graduation, she plans to work while considering her future education and career interests.

## Oneida was Clayton's second chance



From Indiana, Clayton became passionate about playing football starting in middle school. In high school, he started making bad choices with an older group of friends. "I wasn't worried about grades, I was only worried about football," he said.

Adopted at age 12 after years of living with relatives or in foster care homes, Clayton said his parents assumed he was depressed. Intervention efforts failed and Clayton recalled, "I didn't care about anything, not even football, and football was my life. I just stopped trying in everything."

Clayton hit "rock bottom" after he was expelled from school in the tenth grade. During the following months, Clayton said, "I started praying and reading the Bible a lot. I got closer to the Lord, and I prayed for one more chance." His Kentucky grandparents who had been volunteers at Oneida suggested it as an option, and he enrolled as a junior. "When I came to Oneida, I felt like I got that chance to do my life over. I felt like He answered my prayers for sure! I know it's the best thing for me now," Clayton said.

Clayton made the honor roll both years at OBI. He reflected, "I wish I had been focused like this my whole high school career. I'm definitely glad I'm graduating. It made my mom and my grandparents proud, and that's pretty cool." His goal after graduation is to pursue a degree in cyber security.

## Fortuna finished strong at Oneida



From Ethiopia, Fortuna enrolled at OBI in 2017 as a junior. "We traveled a lot because of my dad's work. I've been going to international schools since I was 10. I've been to 16 different schools," she said. Her cousin graduated from OBI in 2017, and her family decided it would be good for Fortuna. She said, "It would be an easier transition for me for college. I still don't know what I want to do with my future, but my cousin said that being at OBI would guide me to something and help me figure out what I might like."

Her parents liked that OBI was a Christian school. "They said, 'It's good to have God in your life. Since we can't be there, God will be with you and give you comfort,'" Fortuna recalled.

Repeatedly changing schools had taken a toll on Fortuna's GPA. She was thankful to finish her last two years of high school on the A honor roll at OBI.

Fortuna gained work experience in the Career Placement program as a teacher's assistant in OBI's Lower School. "It was so interesting to see the kids every day. They always had things to tell me. It was fun to build those relationships," she smiled.

After school, she participated in soccer, cheerleading and track and field. The cheerleading captain her senior year, she enjoyed developing leadership skills. "I did not expect to have that position! It was nice to be able to lead the team," she said.

Enrolled in art class both years at OBI, Fortuna said, "Every school I transferred to, I always did art." She is interested in studying architectural design in college next year.

**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

## Cody refocused, graduated on time at OBI



Born in the Philippines, Cody lived with his great-aunt and 10 other family members in a one-room cottage. His grandparents, who he calls “mom” and “dad,” lived in Arizona and adopted Cody and his younger brother just before Cody’s 11th birthday. Though he was sad to leave the only place he had called home, Cody said, “I wanted to move. We lived in a poor area in the Philippines. We didn’t have things like a telephone or nice clothes.”

At home in Arizona, Cody had his own bedroom. “It was so big!” he smiled. Cody’s dad is the pastor of Brown Road Baptist Church in Mesa, Arizona, where Cody was baptized at about age 13. His parents learned about Oneida from church members.

Cody struggled as a fifth grader in public school because he did not know English. In middle school, he said, “I failed a lot. School just wasn’t my thing.” He started hanging out with the wrong crowd and getting into trouble. He enrolled at OBI in 2016 to repeat the ninth grade but admitted that he was not focused on school. He got in some trouble and recalled, “My dad told me ... if I still mess around, I won’t get to move up, [and] I won’t make it in life. I became serious about my grades. My friends at the dorm taught me how to do my homework and helped me with English. I asked the teachers to go slowly so I could understand.” Cody passed his freshman classes and received a Most Improved award in math. He stayed for summer school and was reclassified as a junior for 2017-18.

Though he had never played soccer, he joined the OBI team as a junior and was made the goal keeper. He was named Best Defender last year and Most Valuable Player his senior year. After graduation, Cody plans to join the Navy. He said, “My dad was a corpsman. I’m going to be a mechanic or an electrician.”

**Mark your calendar for  
Homecoming 2019 on  
October 19th!**



***Huang Hall, our new girls’ dormitory and academic building will be open for the 2019-20 school year.***



***OBI Drama performed their spring play, “Ace of Diamonds” by T. James Belich, March 28-30.***