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ONEIDA MOUNTAINEER

Education for Time and Eternity

A bi-monthly newsletter of Oneida Baptist Institute

May/June 2017



The materials for the **22nd annual Father's Day Offering** for Oneida Baptist Institute were packed and labeled by volunteers from Kentucky and Illinois in April and mailed to Kentucky Baptist churches in May.

This year's theme is "Oneida + Opportunity = Success." At OBI, students are given the opportunity to focus on academics while exploring talents and interests in a wide variety of cocurriculars and work experiences, all within a Christian environment.

Our hope and prayer for the Father's Day Offering is that churches would open their boxes and make the information about OBI available to congregations and potential students. Because of the support and prayers of friends just like you, young people from around the world can find their opportunity to succeed at Oneida Baptist Institute. □



Volunteers counted fliers and envelopes for over 2,000 Father's Day Offering boxes mailed in May.

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.



Meet some of our 2017 graduates

Talia thankful for opportunity to come to America and to OBI



In Talia's birth family, there are seven girls and five boys who were placed into an orphanage because their parents could not care for them. After 12 years in the orphanage, Talia was no longer interested in being adopted but was focused on graduating from school. She said, "I wanted to show that even poor kids can have a dream." When a couple from California wanted to adopt Talia and her younger sister, her sister wanted to go. Talia said, "I didn't want her to be alone, so I decided to go with her."

In the U.S., Talia had a difficult adjustment because of the language barrier. "I got angry when they couldn't understand me," she recalled. She also had a hard time getting along with her adoptive mother. When the subject of attending OBI came up, Talia struggled with feelings of rejection and

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sadness about leaving her little sister. She said, "I thought this would be just another orphanage, but then I realized this was the opportunity I needed for life!" She enrolled at OBI in February, 2014 as an eighth grader.

At OBI, Talía said, "I really liked that everything we need was here—food, the programs; everything was built around us. You could talk to the houseparents whenever you wanted if you have issues. People here hope the best for you and help you to realize the way you should go."

Talía admitted that when she first came to Oneida, she had some "issues" to work through. "I had a bunch of problems with everybody. I was a bully," she said. Talking with houseparents, our campus minister and Christian friends while learning more about God and daily living in chapel and getting answers to faith questions in Bible class helped Talía to choose a better path for her life. Accepting Christ during her freshman year, she recalled, "It was weird. Things started to go different for me. Jesus changed me for real! Houseparents looked for me to help others, to tell them my story and how I've changed. I became more of a leader than a follower." Talía was named the Most Improved in the dormitory last year.

Talía discovered a talent in the area of sports when she got involved as a sophomore. She became the starting goalie and earned the Best Defense award in soccer. In basketball, she was a manager, a JV player and a varsity player. She also played tennis and softball. Talía enjoyed sports because it gave her a daily outlet for stress and a chance to be out of the dormitory.

For the last two years, Talía has served in the dorm as a Resident Assistant. She applied for the position, because, "I wanted to show people that even when you have a hard past, you can overcome. I wanted to help people and teach them about the right path, to get them closer to Christ."

Talía is planning to major in criminal justice in college next year. She reflected, "I sometimes think what my life would be like if I wasn't at OBI. I'm thankful for the opportunities they gave me. I came to OBI, and I realized that God is real. OBI is a place of hope." □

Clay discovered talent in drafting and design



Clay was born in Cincinnati, Ohio and noted, "All my family lives in Ohio." When he was about 10 years old, his parents were called into full-time ministry with Youth Haven Bible Camp which led to them taking positions at the Christian Youth Center in Manchester, Kentucky. Like many "preacher's kids," Clay wondered why God's calling for his parents had to affect his life. Still, he helped out at the youth center and played basketball with the kids in the evenings.

Clay and his younger sister had been home-schooled their whole lives. It was the last quarter of Clay's freshman year, when his parents joined the OBI staff. Attending a school with its variety of rules was a challenge, but meeting new people was a silver lining. "I met people from all over the world and learned about different cultures. Because I was home-schooled, I didn't meet a lot of people except at church. Here, I've got the whole world of people," Clay said.

The opportunity to join team sports was another advantage for Clay, who earned four varsity athletic letters and was named Rookie of the Year his first year with the OBI baseball team. He was a varsity starter and noted, "I've played like every position."

When he took a commercial art class his junior year, Clay discovered an interest and talent in graphic design and drafting. "I'm good at using computers, and I thought I could try it. I really liked it. I can't draw [by hand], but I can do it on the computer," he said. In the Career Placement program his senior year, he worked for two class periods a day in the commercial art sign lab where he made vinyl signs and assisted with drafting projects. He plans to continue his studies in drafting at a technical college in central Kentucky. □

Alex gained experience in work, leadership



Alex and her twin sister came to Oneida as seventh graders from central Kentucky. Their two older sisters had attended OBI, and their grandparents, Joe and Elizabeth Buckner, served on staff for many years. Alex said, "We wanted to see what it would be like."

Alex said that her sister returned home for high school, but Alex chose to stay at OBI because she felt she performed better academically at OBI due to the smaller classes. Alex graduated fifth in her class at OBI.

For her after school jobs at OBI, Alex said, "I think I've worked everywhere!" She amassed a wide variety of experiences at Oneida including dorm cleaning, sports and cooking in the campus grill. Alex was also a Resident Assistant and participated in OBI's Career Placement program. She noted, "The work program gives students responsibility and [teaches] you how to work with supervisors and co-workers and how to be on time and do what's expected," she said. Alex earned an Outstanding Worker award, Manager of the Year in softball, varsity letters in softball and cheerleading and a Cleanest Room award.

Alex was baptized in her home church in the fourth grade. At OBI, she said, "I think chapel is great for kids who have never had an opportunity to go to church. I do learn new things most days I go to chapel. It kind of keeps you open-minded and gives you a new perspective."

Alex was accepted to Berea College where she plans to major in business. She would like to one day own a restaurant. □

Makenzie learned time management skills



Makenzie had been struggling academically at home in Texas, partly because she was overly committed to cocurriculars and did not manage her time well. Makenzie did not welcome her mother's involvement. She explained, "She would tell me to sit down at the table and do my work, and I wouldn't. I'm the type of person that if my mom tells me I have to do something, I don't."

Her mother did some research into boarding schools and found Oneida. Makenzie recalled, "She wanted a fresh start for me, so I could work on my academics." Makenzie

attended summer school at OBI in 2015 and said, "I absolutely fell in love with it! When I got [home], I couldn't stop talking about it!"

Part of Makenzie's academic struggle was test anxiety. "I'm really bad at testing. It discouraged me, because I felt like I couldn't do it," she said. This discouragement fueled her procrastination of homework. At OBI, she learned that even if she performed poorly on a test, she did not have to give up on her other work. She said, "The biggest thing we have here is support. The teachers will pull us aside and say, 'We're praying for you.' They believed in me even when I didn't."

Makenzie joined a variety of activities at Oneida, but this time was different. She explained, "You have a set amount of time for each activity, and school is prioritized. It's not all about sports here." She participated in cheerleading, swimming and softball. She also worked in the campus grill and as a supervisor of cleaning crews. Her junior year, she was a member of the OBI choir. She enjoyed meeting people at the churches and noted, "I saw a different side to Oneida. We would meet alumni and hear their stories. We saw how much they loved and appreciated OBI." She sang with the All Festival Choir, a regional honor choir. Makenzie added, "At OBI, I could do all of this and still focus on my academics."

Makenzie's plan to become a nurse was influenced by the six mission trips she has taken with a medical mission team from her home church. □

Alvin said OBI 'prepared me for life'



Alvin enrolled as a sophomore from Georgia. His parents had attended boarding school and wanted him to experience it. An advantage they noted about OBI was the rural setting, which would enable Alvin to focus on school and to participate in sports right on campus. Alvin added, "I thought it would be something new, something different!"

Alvin's grades improved to above-average at OBI thanks to smaller classes. "It became something I was actually proud of," he said. He enjoyed living in the dormitory and earned the Cleanest Room award and be-

came a Resident Assistant. "I just enjoyed helping the kids and making sure the dorm is well run," he said.

At Oneida, Alvin participated in soccer, basketball, track and field and tennis. He appreciated OBI's no-cut policy. "The kids that are new to the sport, they bring along. Everyone can play," he said. Alvin earned the Top Scorer and Offensive Player of the Year awards in soccer. He accepted a soccer scholarship to Lindsey Wilson College where he will major in marketing.

Being in a Christian school helped him to prioritize his spiritual life. Alvin said, "I'm glad I made the choice to come here. I feel improved as a person. This school has prepared me for life." □

Eyouel benefited from independence at OBI



Eyouel's first time to visit the U.S. was when he enrolled at OBI as a junior. From Ethiopia, Eyouel wanted to finish high school in American "so I could be prepared for college," he said. Eyouel plans to attend Eastern Kentucky University to major in computer science.

Though he has four aunts who live in Texas, Eyouel chose to attend OBI because a friend from his school in Ethiopia attended the previous year and told him about it. "There were people here who made it feel like home," he stated.

Being away from home was difficult for Eyouel at first. He explained, "I had never been away from my mother more than a week! I had independence all at once. I had responsibility all at once. I either studied or I failed." Once he settled into the routine, he realized, "It's a system that's set to make you a leader, to make you a better person. The way Oneida shapes you to become an adult; I like that a lot."

Eyouel started out sweeping a classroom. By his second semester, he was a manager for basketball and a member of the stage crew for the spring play. This year, Eyouel acted in both plays, served as a Resident Assistant in the dorm and competed with the track and field team.

An honor roll student, Eyouel said, "The curriculum here was more suited to my personality. I actually wanted to study and do more in school!" □

Would you like to contact us?

www.oneidaschool.org

telephone: 606-847-4111

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Caleb got 'back on track' to finish high school



Caleb arrived at OBI in February, 2015 as a sophomore from Colorado. His mother had found a boarding school in California, but Caleb said, "It was too expensive. They recommended OBI."

At home, Caleb said, "I kind of had a rough time family-wise and school-wise." His parents were divorced, and his mother was not at home much. Caleb slept on his older sister's sofa for about four months. "I ended up getting depressed and hanging out with the wrong people. My grades started dropping. I needed a better place; a school that focused on catching up," he said.

Despite the upheaval in other areas of his life, Caleb was a Christian who enjoyed serving in the area of sound technology at his home church.

When he heard about OBI, he was reluctant to travel so far from Colorado. Once he arrived on campus, he said, "Something clicked in my head that I needed to get back on track physically, emotionally and academically. I began doing a lot better after I came to Oneida." He made up English credits in summer school and added, "This school kind of saved me from becoming a drop out. That's what really kept me here. I knew that I had made progress here, but if I went back home I wouldn't have the support I needed. This place really turned my life around."

Caleb demonstrated leadership at OBI in his various after school jobs. He played two seasons of baseball, worked on the OBI farm, cooked in the campus grill, supervised a dormitory cleaning crew and served as a Resident Assistant. Caleb completed two years of the Career Placement program in which he worked as a dormitory office assistant. After graduation, Caleb will join his parents who now live in Arizona. He plans to work while he considers his college and career path. His interests range from becoming a mechanic to studying theology. □

First Annual Oneida Pastors' Conference & Retreat

All pastors and their families are invited to join us **July 24-26, 2017** on the OBI campus for worship, seminars, family activities, food & fellowship! There is no charge! For more information, email: OPC@oneidaschool.org



Keep Clipping!

The Campbell's "Labels for Education" program is ending. Please send any labels you have collected by July 1, 2017. OBI will continue to participate in the General Mills' "Box Tops for Education" and Tyson's "Project A+" programs.

OBI Drama's Spring Play



"Romeo & Juliet's Unofficial, Unnecessary Sequel" by Edward J. Thomas

was performed March 30-April 1.