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# ONEIDA MOUNTAINEER

Education for Time and Eternity

A bi-monthly newsletter of Oneida Baptist Institute

May/June 2015

## I'M POSSIBLE!

at Oneida Baptist Institute



The materials for the 20th annual Father's Day Offering for Oneida were packed and labeled by Illinois volunteers in April and mailed to Kentucky Baptist Churches (and a few out-of-state churches) in May.

We chose the theme, "I'm Possible," to represent the many teenagers who find their way to Oneida and discover potential. Many students are struggling in some area of their lives and need a fresh start. Others may not have had opportunities at home to explore their talents and interests. Once they begin to find success at Oneida in any area, their outlook on life can change. What once looked "impossible," now looks possible.

Luke 18:27 states, "The things which are impossible with men are possible with GOD." Introducing young people to the love of God and salvation through His Son, Jesus is our top priority, and many give their lives to Him each year—sometimes the ones who seemed the most "impossible."

Our hope and prayer for the Father's Day Offering is that churches would receive and open their boxes and make the information about OBI available to congregations and potential students. It is because of the support and prayers of the Kentucky Baptist Convention and Christians from all over the United States that young people continue to say, "I'M POSSIBLE at Oneida!"



*Just a reminder...*

OBI's Homecoming 2015 is **October 24!**

*Meet some of our 2015 graduates*

### Erin found the missing piece in her life—God



Erin enrolled at OBI for the spring semester her sophomore year. The Ohio native explained that her dad traveled a lot because of his job. "I was having a really hard time with things. I was depressed and felt like a lot of things were missing," she said. Erin did not grow up attending

church but said, "I had always been interested in going to church and learning about Christianity."

Erin was ready for a change. "I felt like I needed a break from everything. ... I really loved it when I first came here. I made so many good friends here. I looked forward every day to chapel, because I learned so much!" she said. During her junior year, chapel services for Erin were particularly meaningful. She said, "I left every time feeling so good!" After the spring revival that year, she talked with the pastor of Oneida Baptist Church about baptism. "I had learned a lot more, and I felt like I was ready," she said. She was baptized in April, 2014.

As a young Christian at OBI, Erin appreciates that her teachers will take time to talk about spiritual beliefs. "The fact that my teachers talk to me about God; they look us in the eye and share their passion about Christianity with us—that's the best part and what makes it feel like a Christian school," she said. Erin also benefited from having Christian friends who she said "helped me through a lot of my spiritual journey this year."

The hardest thing for Erin to "give up" when she came  
(Erin continued p. 2)

(Erin continued)

to Oneida was her school's competitive cheerleading program. She shared her experience and skills with the OBI squad, which included many girls who were new to the activity, and was named the team captain. Erin also participated in soccer and received a Most Outstanding Manager award in softball. She was voted by the Class of 2015 as the senior girl with the Most School Spirit.

When Erin considered staying home this year, she said, "I just really felt like I had started something with myself here, and that I wasn't done with it. I was so thirsty to know more about God. ... I realized I had never been in a place like this where everyone wants to get to know you and to love you. I didn't know I could be proud of myself and accomplish so much. Why would I stay home when I'm thriving so much, and I'm still growing?"

Erin plans to become a dental hygienist and looks forward to starting college this fall. □

**Would you like to contact us?**

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

## Dakota needed independence



Dakota come from a unique family where he is sixth of 12 children, seven of whom are adopted. His three younger sisters are also his biological siblings. His family lives on a farm in rural central Kentucky. Dakota said he was not getting along with his parents and needed a change. "It got worse over time, so something had to be done," he said. His dad found OBI on the internet. Dakota agreed to come to Oneida as a junior knowing that it was his best option.

Once he was on campus, he enjoyed the "controlled independence" and had no trouble adjusting to our rules, like having an after-school

job. He had been used to a part-time job and plenty of chores at home and commented, "If anything, it's easier here."

He joined the cross country team and advanced with the boys' team to the state meet in 2014. Dakota renewed his lifeguard certification at a class offered at OBI and joined the rotation of student lifeguards. He participated in three school plays and received the Best Supporting Actor award. Dakota served for two years as an evening hall monitor on the middle school boys' floor in the dormitory.

A member of the auditioned vocal ensemble, Dakota enjoyed traveling on Sundays. He said, "I like being with my friends and the chance to go off campus and get a nice meal at a church." He enrolled in guitar class and said, "I started playing before I came here. I wanted to learn more." Dakota plans to study music therapy in college. The OBI faculty voted him the Most Likely to Succeed.

Growing up in a family which attended church regularly, Dakota noted, "I think they do a better job at ministering to people in my age range here." He accepted Christ last fall and feels that the biblical teaching at OBI helped him "to see through" arguments against Christianity. He added, "Being around Christians here, adults and students, is the best ministry." □

## Nirina found Christ and a mission



Nirina enrolled at OBI as a freshman from Virginia. Originally from Madagascar, she had been adopted from an orphanage by her American parents when she was eight years old. "When I first came to the U.S. I was really lonely, because I could not speak English. It took about two years to learn English," she said. It was a difficult adjustment for her which led to conflicts at home and at school. She recalled, "At the orphanage, we didn't really have rules. It was different having two parents in the same house giving us instructions. I guess it was hard, because I was used to doing whatever I wanted."

Nirina did not react well to the news that she would be going to a new school her freshman year, but once she arrived in Oneida, she realized that it

was a good fit for her. "I liked OBI because I could be on my own and do things the way I wanted. It helped me to be responsible," she said.

Nirina learned quickly that working in the kitchen after school was not her favorite activity, so she joined sports including volleyball, cheerleading and tennis. She won the Rookie of the Year award in tennis. She was also a three-year member of the OBI FFA chapter and participated in livestock showing.

Nirina accepted Christ while she was attending summer school at OBI in 2013. She explained, "Before I came here, I went to church with my family but I never really understood anything." During her freshman year, she learned more about God through meaningful sermons and special guests in chapel. "Even if you try to ignore it, it still goes into your head and makes you think," she said. As a Christian, Nirina enjoyed Christian fellowship in organizations like Baptist Campus Ministry and Fellowship of Christian Athletes.

After graduation, Nirina has plans to spend a year in Madagascar serving as a missionary with Teen Mission, a group which had visited OBI last fall. "Ever since I got adopted and got saved, I've always wanted to do something to help people and to spread the word of God and tell people about Jesus!" Nirina said. □



## Tucker & Trent thrived in cocurriculars



Tucker (above) and Trent (below), twins who grew up in Florida, came to Oneida halfway through the seventh grade when their parents joined the OBI faculty. Their grandparents had worked at Oneida as full-time volunteers for a number of years, and the boys had visited them in Kentucky

Visits were one thing; moving was another. Trent said, "I was not too excited to leave the sun and my friends." Both coped with the change by getting involved at OBI. Having been home-schooled and not involved in many activities, Oneida's cocurriculars were a silver lining for the boys.

At OBI, Tucker acted in nine plays. He received two Best Supporting Actor awards and the Director's Award as a senior. "At first I was really shy. Drama helped me a lot with that. You get out in front of people, and afterwards, people talk to you, and you get to meet more people that way," he said. In guitar class, he received the Most Valuable Player, Best Lead Guitar and the Outstanding Achievement in Music awards. He also earned a fine arts letter jacket for drama and guitar.

Trent was active at OBI but with a different approach. He said, "I wanted to give everything a try and be well-rounded. I wanted to do as many things as I could." He worked after school on the farm in auto maintenance and learned to weld. He was the stage manager for a play and tried tennis and baseball. He competed for four years with the swim team and was the team captain for two years.

Tucker and Trent were selected

to attend the 2013 Hugh O'Brian Youth Leadership Conference. Trent was named the Most Improved sophomore boy. Tucker received a Mountaineer of Noble Distinction award and is graduating fifth in his class.

Trent became interested in graphic design and joined the commercial art class. He recalled, "The teacher told me I have an eye for this. Hearing that at a young age encouraged me to keep on with it.... God opened a lot of opportunities for me here." In the Career Placement program, Trent worked for two periods a day in the sign lab. He also began working as a freelance designer. In college, he plans to major in business and marketing.

Tucker worked after school this year as an assistant to the athletic director and hopes his experience will help him find a job during college. He plans to major in nursing and said, "My mom is a nurse, and I enjoy helping people." □



*Great job, OBI Drama! The spring play was performed for the public April 9-11 with a matinee on April 8th for about 250 children from nearby public elementary schools.*

## Veronica gained work experience



Veronica enrolled at OBI as a sophomore from New York because her cousin was a student here. "Our moms are best friends, and we're best friends. She was lonely, so I came here! She told me a lot of great things about OBI," Veronica said.

Veronica gained work experience at OBI in both her after school jobs and as part of the Career Placement program this year. She said, "I had no jobs back home. Having a job every day made me more responsible." Veronica worked as a clerk in the dining hall, an assistant in the library and a receptionist in the main office.

Because sports fulfill OBI's job requirement, this encouraged Veronica to try something new. "I tried track, and I placed 11th at regionals in the 100 meter dash! After that, I got more involved in sports." She also received the Coach's Award in track and later joined volleyball and basketball.

Veronica is a member of the National Honor Society and ranked third in OBI's Class of 2015. She earned the Highest GPA award as a junior and was named OBI's Most Studious senior girl. She would like to earn a degree in chemistry before enrolling in a pharmacy program.

Though she came to OBI because of her cousin, Veronica sees how she personally benefited from Oneida. "Sometimes I wonder what it would have been like at my old school, but I feel like Oneida was better for me. I have a more personal relationship with God. I feel like I'm on a journey with Him," she said. □

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## Lily met friends, caring teachers



Lily attended OBI as a day student in grades 7-11. She decided to move into the dormitory her senior year. "I wanted to get an idea of what college will be like and to be more involved my senior year. I also wanted more access to the teachers to have what I needed to get good grades," she explained.

Lily grew up in Georgia, but her family moved to Oneida before she started the seventh grade. Lily's father and grandfather are both OBI graduates, but it was still a "new" school for Lily. She recalled, "I was scared my first year that no one would like me." She made friends quickly and pointed out, "It was different to have the teachers actually care for you. You're not just a number. It was really interesting to meet people from around the world!"

Lily worked on the farm and participated in the FFA. She earned several awards including chapter degrees, livestock showmanship awards and Outstanding Worker awards. She explored her interest in sports by joining the softball team and golf team. Lily acted in both the fall and spring plays this year and received the 110% Award in drama. She explained her commitment to after-school activities, even when she lived off campus, saying, "I like being here. I like being around everyone." □

## Chaowapong developed talents



From Thailand, Chaowapong enrolled at OBI as a sophomore because a friend from his home church was a student here. He looked forward to cooler weather and the chance to practice English every day.

When he arrived on campus, Chaowapong chose an American nickname, "Woody," and enjoyed getting to know people from all over the world.

"Mostly my friends are from South Korea. It's a really good opportunity," he said. Woody was raised in a Christian home, attended church regularly and was baptized at the age of 15. He liked incorporating his faith with his education at OBI. "We get to worship every day here. I like the music they play in chapel," he said. Woody received awards from his guitar and piano teachers. He also competed two seasons each with the track and swim teams.

Woody was voted the Most Studious senior boy and plans to attend college in Thailand to study architecture. "Drawing is my thing," he said. At OBI, he won top awards in art class and the campus art show. He presented a pencil drawing of Carnahan Hall, the boys' dormitory which is being torn down, to OBI president, Mr. Larry Allen Gritton, Jr., for display in his office. □