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ONEIDA MOUNTAINEER

Education for Time and Eternity

A bi-monthly newsletter of Oneida Baptist Institute

May/June 2016



Jesus said,
"Let the little children
come to me, and
do not hinder them, for
the kingdom of heaven
belongs to such as these."

Matthew 19:14

The materials for the **21st annual Father's Day Offering** for Oneida Baptist Institute were packed and labeled by volunteers from Kentucky and Illinois in April. The boxes, which included flyers and a DVD, were mailed to Kentucky Baptist churches in May.



Matthew 19:14 has been a theme on campus for the last three years as we have prayerfully sought to expand our enrollment. In just this school year, our enrollment increased from 315 to 340.

OBI president Mr. Larry A. Gritton, Jr. shares this scripture at every church to which he and the choir travel. One of the things that makes OBI unique and special, Mr. Gritton tells congregations, is that a student does not have to be a Christian to come to our Christian school. As a result, many students, when given the opportunity to hear the gospel, give their hearts to the Lord.

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 come to Oneida Baptist Institute. □

Meet some of our 2016 graduates

Simon and Olivia - "staff kids" whose parents are OBI alumni



Simon and Olivia are two of the four graduates in the Class of 2016 whose parents not only serve on the OBI staff but who are also alumni of Oneida Baptist Institute. Olivia's mother graduated from OBI in 1988, and Simon's father is a 1982 Oneida graduate. Both Olivia and Simon experienced moving to Oneida and making new friends after their parents decided to join the Oneida ministry.

Olivia and her younger sister, Emma, had grown up on a farm in Marion county, Kentucky. They had been home-schooled and enjoyed being active in their church and community. Olivia said, "We were going to an awesome church, and had a lot of really close friends. We played outside 'til it was dark and were very independent. I liked my life, and I didn't want to move!"

After a tearful trip to Oneida, Olivia, a seventh grader at the time, recalled their first night in Oneida when a number of other "staff kids" came to their door to introduce themselves. "The other kids took the initiative to include the new kids. That helped. After that, we just kind of hit it off with everybody," she said.

Beginning in the eighth grade, Olivia's main after school activity became OBI Drama. She acted in ten productions and earned the Up & Coming Award, Best Extra, Best Supporting Actress, Best Actress and Director's Award. Her senior year, Olivia was crowned the Oneidian Yearbook Queen and won the pageant's talent award after performing a monologue.

In February, 2015, Olivia had the opportunity to serve

(Olivia & Simon continued p. 2)



Campbell's is discontinuing its participation in the "Labels for Education" program. Please send any labels you have collected for OBI to us by July 1, 2016. We are STILL accepting General Mills' "Box Tops for Education" and Tyson's "Project A+" labels.

(Olivia & Simon continued)

with a missions team in Haiti. She worked with orphaned children and enjoyed the nightly worship services. "It was an amazing experience to have unity together worshipping God but not necessarily in the same language. We were there to work and to serve the people, but they were more of a blessing to us! I'd always heard missionaries say that, but I didn't know until I experienced it," Olivia said.

She spent the summer 2015 earning money to return to Haiti during her senior year and was surprised when a couple she met on her first trip assisted her with funds. A group who is going to Haiti in June 2016 invited Olivia to join them. It will be her third missions trip in two years. She said, "It's become a huge part of me. I feel like obviously it's a God thing, because of the money. I save what I can, and somehow God provides the rest."

Olivia discovered a passion for teaching younger children through OBI's Career Placement program, where she worked as an assistant in OBI's daycare and Kindergarten class. She plans to earn a dual degree in early childhood education and special education. She reflected, "Before coming to Oneida, we had been very sheltered. I feel like if we had stayed home and then I had gone to college, I would have been crushed. I've learned a lot, and I'll leave crying. I'm glad I came, and I know I'll miss it."

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Simon's parents worked for several years at OBI but moved away soon after he was born. Growing up, he heard a lot about Oneida. He had

just finished his freshman year when his parents told Simon and his older brother, Samuel, a senior, that they felt called to return to OBI. He said, "I saw it as a challenge. I was up to making new friends, and I was excited!" One of the first things he noticed about OBI was the diversity. "It was super cool to meet everybody," he said.

Simon shared that for most of his elementary and middle school years he struggled academically. "Everybody else was getting it so much faster than I was. I really pushed myself to try to keep up. I overcame it, and my mom and dad were very supportive," he said. At OBI, he was determined to challenge himself with honors and advanced placement classes. "I really like to learn new things. I didn't want to not take a class because I was afraid of failing. ... The curriculum here is great, and the teachers helped me to understand things. If you need help, they will sit down and help you until you have confidence," he said.

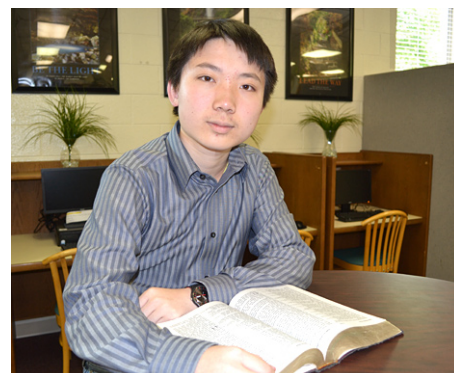
Simon is a member of the National Honor Society and is graduating as OBI's Class of 2016 salutatorian. He added, "I feel like if I can do it, anybody can do it." In college, Simon is interested in studying communications, law or politics. He said, "I'm just letting God show me what to do."

Simon got involved in sports at an early age beginning with soccer and basketball. At OBI, he went to state in tennis all three years. He made the All Region team for two years and was named the Defensive MVP in soccer. In basketball, Simon was named to the All Region Class A and All District teams. He was awarded OBI's Schol-

ar-Athlete award and was an Athlete of the Year finalist. He said, "I feel like at Oneida you have a better sense of team because everybody is so close."

Simon has enjoyed finishing high school in a Christian environment. "It's been a great learning experience. OBI is filled with God-fearing people, and it's helped me so much," he said. □

William accepted Christ at OBI



William (his American nickname), from China, enrolled at OBI as a senior last fall having attended a public school in Texas as part of an exchange program. He said, "I found out I really liked America! My dad thinks you can get a better education in America."

When he was younger, William's parents were led to Christ by a British preacher, but William was not certain about his spiritual beliefs. Being in a Christian environment at OBI and having plenty of time to think about his faith led to his exploration of Christianity through long conversations with others, hearing personal testimonies from teachers and reading the Bible. He joined a Sunday evening Bible study group where he said, "We talked about the Bible and shared what we learned from the Bible with our friends. ... I can feel the Holy Spirit is here."

William made a decision for Christ and chose to be baptized in November, 2015. He recalled, "I talked to my dad about it, and he said, 'I'm glad you finally came to that decision.'"

William plans to attend a college in Kentucky to study international affairs and history. □



Class of 2016 second-generation graduates whose parents are serving on the OBI Ministry Team (L-R):
Simon Robinson - His father, David ('82) serves as the OBI Principal.
Nathaniel Miller - His mother, Stacy ('93) serves as the OBI Freshman English Teacher.
Olivia Nelson - Her mother, Amy ('88) serves as an OBI Tutor.
Sam Kelsey - His father, Jeff ('89), serves as the OBI Dean of Boys.

Madison continued the family tradition at OBI



Madison's mother graduated from OBI in 1983, and Madison was interested in continuing the "family tradition." When her grades dropped in middle school, her mom suggested it was time. Living less than an hour from campus, she moved into the OBI dormitory as an eighth grader. "The first week was hard. It was a big adjustment. ... My mom always cleaned my room, and I had to do it here. It's good, because it teaches kids responsibility. I'm thankful now," she said.

Madison was behind in math and needed the one-on-one tutoring in OBI's Learning Center to catch up. She said, "They really helped me a lot. The amount of stuff I needed to learn in a year; I don't know how they did it! The teachers really care about you."

Having a daily required job took some adjustment for Madison who said, "When they said I had to work in the kitchen, I wanted to go home right then!" Learning that sports would fulfill

her work requirement, she was happy to join the OBI Lady Mountaineers. In her fifth season, Madison became OBI's All-Time Leading Scorer and first female basketball player to score 2,000 career points.

Madison received the Most Valuable Player award in cross country, basketball and softball and was named to the All District and All Region teams in basketball. She received the Offensive MVP award in soccer and a basketball scholarship to college, where she plans to study criminal justice.

Madison became a Christian when she was younger but did not take her faith seriously as a teenager. She said, "At home, I just went to church to meet up with friends" Daily chapel services and OBI's Christian environment drew her closer to God. "I think that's the main reason why my mom wanted me to come here. You don't get the godly environment you need in public schools. [At OBI], being able to openly talk in class about any matter or a prayer request; ... it really made my faith stronger," she said.

Once her grades had improved, Madison said, "The people kept me here. Some of the staff have helped me tremendously. I can't thank them enough. I went from having one parent to feeling like I have a whole family to help me. My friends really will be lifetime friends. Even to this day, my mom still talks to her OBI friends." □

Ashley discovered a talent in sports



Ashley came to Oneida from Washington state, though she currently lives in Arizona. Because of her parents' jobs, Ashley said, "We used to never be in a place more than two years. ... My parents didn't like how it took me out of school."

As a sixth grader, Ashley had some growing up to do. "When I first got here, if I didn't want to do it, I wasn't going to do it," she explained. Positive influences at OBI helped her to improve. "The people here treated me like family. They got me headed in the right direction," she said.

Ashley discovered a talent in sports by joining basketball. As an eighth grader, she was a starter and received the Most Improved award. "I was really happy because I was out of the kitchen. I never thought I'd be so good at it!" she said.

Ashley played six seasons of basketball, three seasons of softball and two seasons of soccer. She earned the Coach's Award and Defensive MVP award in basketball and the Game Saver Award and the Offensive MVP award in soccer. She was named OBI's Athlete of the Year as a senior. She plans to study sports management in college.

Baptized at the age of nine, Ashley said she gained understanding of her faith at OBI. "When I pictured God, He was like a mythical person who lived in mansion and not as Someone who sent His Son to die for my sins," she said. As an eighth grader, she rededicated her life to Christ. □



OBI Drama performed "Delusions of Grandeur" for the public April 7-9 with a matinee on April 6th for children from public elementary schools. (Pictured: Jordan Cochran and Olivia Nelson.)

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Just a reminder...

Homecoming 2016 is **October 22**

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Tyler enjoyed more opportunities



Tyler lives about 15 minutes from OBI and attended public school in grades K-9. He said, "I would come home and complain about the bus ride every day." His mother, a 1988 OBI alumna, suggested he try it. "She said she loved it here," Tyler said.

The bus ride was not Tyler's only reason for enrolling at OBI his sophomore year.

"I wanted a better relationship with God," he said. Daily chapel services reinforced his faith. "They do stuff to get your attention. It gets kids more involved," he said.

Tyler has always been a good student but said he benefited from OBI's smaller classes. He enrolled in three honors classes and developed skills in the area of graphic design during his two years of commercial art class.

In basketball and baseball at OBI, Tyler enjoyed more playing time during games. He said, "I didn't have much experience. ... The people here give you the opportunity." In the Career Placement program, he worked as an assistant to the middle school basketball coach and P.E. teacher. Tyler said, "Career Placement is a good program. It teaches you to be responsible and what it's like to have a job."

Looking forward to working in his father's bakery, he said, "I'm ready to start a new chapter in my life." □

Maria found faith in God at OBI



One of seven children in her family, Maria was adopted by her northern Kentucky family at age six from an orphanage in Guatemala. Her mother graduated from OBI and wanted Maria to experience the benefits Oneida had to offer. "My mom thought it would be a place for me to try new things," Maria said.

When she arrived at OBI in 2010, she said, "I never met so many kids from so many different places! ... I met a lot of new friends from all over the world. I really liked it, so I kept coming back." Maria admitted that she had some growing up to do in the area of her behavior. She recalled, "I would refuse to do what I was told, and I would get suspended. ... I had to catch on that I was here for a reason."

Maria participated in a variety of cocurriculars including year-round sports, yearbook staff, student council and FFA. She was First Runner Up in the annual Yearbook Queen pageant. In the Career Placement program, she worked on the farm to prepare for veterinary studies in college.

Maria accepted Christ her freshman year and was baptized at the Oneida Baptist Church. She had not attended church growing up and said, "Oneida helped me figure out that God was there for me." □