

**THIS IS ONEIDA
RETIRED EDUCATORS TELL THEIR ONEIDA STORY**

Written by Dr. Dean Wilson, OBI Middle School Principal

One Sunday morning, an announcement was made that our church was putting together a mission trip to Oneida Baptist Institute, where we could volunteer our services and skills to do whatever our abilities would let us do. I looked at Nona and she looked at me and we raised our hands to indicate we would be willing to go.

As we drove those winding mountain roads, we had no idea what God had in store for us at the end of the road in a place called Oneida Baptist Institute. In less than a week, we knew we wanted to return to OBI as soon as possible to serve God. We went in to see the Oneida president and made arrangements to return as quickly as we could.

We headed the motor home back to OBI in October, thinking we would serve until Thanksgiving and then return home. Before we left Oneida, however, we had made plans to return and would stay until Christmas. Again we found ourselves planning to return to OBI after Christmas. On our way back to Oneida, we decided this was where God wanted us to serve. When we got back to the campus, we sat down with the president and explained to him that we felt this was where God wanted us to serve. We asked if he could use us, and he said, "I would like to have you teach."

In March, we became teachers again (on a trial basis) and it didn't take long for us to fall in love with teaching at OBI. My largest class had 14 students, and Nona had nine. How could any teacher not love that teaching assignment? We have had eight wonderful years here at OBI, and we are in the process of giving up our full-time service. We are not quitting, just moving over to part-time.

We were retired educators and Oneida can often use teachers, whether it is for a school year or a temporary replacement for a maternity, medical, or bereavement leave. Make yourself available to OBI, and if it is the place God has for you, they will find a place to put your skills to use. I have found this to be true; whenever and wherever we have made ourselves available and willing to work, God has used us. God can always use you. Be still and listen for His voice.

It is not possible to explain Oneida Baptist Institute and our time here. I will close, therefore, with this simple answer which we have given to friends and family over the last few years when asked, "How can you just leave your home and go off up there?" You just lock the door, trust God, and go. He will do the rest.



**Larry A. Gritton, Jr.
OBI President**

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