

## **THIS IS ONEIDA LET THE LITTLE ONES COME**

Oneida Baptist Institute opened her doors on January 1, 1900. That first day of school saw 100 kids of the mountains take seats in our classrooms. These same classrooms and our school would also eventually house kids from across the world.

Our founder, James Anderson Burns, believed the best way to stop the feuding in our area was to educate our children. Some hurting and struggling young people entered our doors that cold day in 1900, and since that day tens of thousands of hurting and struggling kids have since passed through this unique, little place called Oneida.

I love that our kids come from all over our state, country, and world, but I also know our own back yard is filled with kids who need an education for time and eternity. For the 2015-16 school year we have re-opened our doors to local, commuting kindergarten through fifth grade students.

As my family shared an evening meal a few days ago, my wife asked our kids what their favorite thing was about the new school year thus far. I hate to tell you that I can't remember exactly what each of my three children said, but I can remember what my answer was. I said my favorite thing had been seeing our little K-5 children on our campus. Many of these little ones arrive at our campus each morning by bus, and it warms my heart and gives me great satisfaction to know we are fulfilling our original calling and mission.

When I was a staff student, we typically had 100 local students. At this time two years ago, we only had nine local kids. I am thrilled to let you know that at the writing of this article (Aug. 20) we have 59 day students. We also have 52 staff children, which pushes our commuting student total to 111 students. In Matthew 19:14 Jesus said, "Let the little children come to me." We are doing all we can to let them come to Him because we know the kingdom of God belongs to these little ones.

Tuition in 1900 was \$1 per month. Full tuition today is a lot more than \$1, but we still have many kids whose families pay what they can. One of the first things Dr. Barkley Moore did as president of Oneida was eliminate tuition and fees for local kids. Local kids today continue to pay nothing for their education here at OBI.

We are grateful to our friends across this state and country who help us to "do unto the least of these." Come and see these little ones. I promise it will warm your heart to see what God is doing here.



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

*First printed in the Western Recorder September 8, 2015.  
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