

THIS IS ONEIDA A SWEET SPIRIT THAT TOUCHES MANY

The Oneida ministry reaches so many in so many different ways. Hayley is one of our “staff kids.” Her parents, Steve and Sharon, have faithfully served at Oneida for 20 years. Hayley, I believe, has been blessed by the people of Oneida, but has also been such a blessing to those same people.

Hayley has some physical and learning challenges, and once she reached the age at which she could no longer attend public school in the county, it became necessary for us to consider Hayley’s mother’s role and her ability to serve in the ministry of OBI. We arranged a split shift type of job for Sharon that would allow her to be at home with Hayley half of the day.

You might ask, “What does Hayley do that first half of the split shift while both her mother and father teach?” We have a “Career Placement” program that enables upperclassmen to work on campus for a couple of hours during the school day. Some work in our daycare center, some in donations, some in maintenance, some in our IT department, and others serve as office assistants, just to name a few of those jobs.

This past school year, we arranged for some of these Career Placement students to work closely with and care for Hayley for half of the school day. Hayley certainly seems to enjoy this time with friends, but I know those kids who worked so closely with Hayley have also been impacted. One of the students who worked with Hayley is another staff kid named Olivia. Olivia just graduated, and when I met with her in May to gather information for graduation, I noticed she had mentioned she planned to pursue a degree in special education. When I asked her if that desire and field of choice had anything with her time with Hayley, she told me it had everything to do with Hayley. Pursuing a degree in special education wasn’t even on Olivia’s radar before working more closely with Hayley, but her time with Hayley has led her to commit her life to the service of children who need some special attention.

Hayley brings such joy to our campus and to the lives of our students, staff, guests, and volunteers. Each time I see Hayley on our campus, my day and mood are brightened. She has such a sweet and loving spirit, and I would encourage you to try to meet Hayley on your next visit. Although she has never been a student at OBI, she is a life that has been impacted and that has impacted many others. Once again, the Lord uses the people of Oneida to change young lives, and we are grateful for your role in that.



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

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