

THIS IS ONEIDA SUMMER AT ONEIDA

Folks often ask me if we have students on our campus during the summer. The Oneida ministry virtually never stops, and we typically have about 100 students during the summer months. Our school year ended on May 13. You might be wondering how we are out of school so early. Since most of our students are already right here on the campus in our dormitories, we don't take snow days, three-day holiday weekends, etc. We are much better off to keep our young people in structured routines than to allow them to have days off to just hang around the dorm. Our public school friends often make comments about their envy of our early dismissal date, but I often remind them that we did not have all the days off during the school year that they enjoyed.

Once school ended, about two-thirds of our students left our campus for the summer. We had a wonderful graduation celebration on May 14 and then the vast majority of those 55 graduates left campus. Some of our graduates stayed on campus to finish their spring sport seasons – baseball, tennis, track, etc. On Monday, May 16 we began our five-week summer school term. Some of those 100 or so students need to recover credit and make up classes. Some are working to get ahead. Some are seniors who need to finish up something to actually receive their diploma, and others are, quite frankly, better off staying here on our campus and taking classes than returning home to some difficult circumstance.

Once our five-week summer school session ends, many of those same summer school kids stay on campus for four additional weeks to work in our work program. Those are the kids on scholarship and they work from 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. each day. They paint, wax floors, work on our farm, mow the grass, work in the kitchen, and many other things.

Since there are fewer students here than there are during the regular school year, summer is a more laid-back atmosphere. This is also a time that we receive some new students to begin their own Oneida journey. This is a good time for them to adjust to the Oneida way before the regular school year arrives.

Once the work program ends in late July, we do close our dorms down and all students leave campus. At this time our staff takes vacation time. After that vacation time, we begin to prepare our campus for the new school year. We also have staff meetings to kick off our new year. Any meeting involving all staff is really only possible when the students are gone, but I must admit it feels quite lonely when our students are gone.

As you can see, Oneida keeps on keeping on during the summer. Come and see for yourself any time!



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