

THIS IS ONEIDA TEACHING RESPONSIBILITY

In the years preceding our move to Oneida, my family lived in a home that we rented and we didn't own any pets. Once we moved to Oneida and moved into our home that included some land, we decided to dip our toes in the pet ownership pool. We thought we were in the ideal location to have some dogs, but it didn't quite work out that way. The dogs would not stay home, began roaming the school's campus, and chased cows on the farm. Our kids soon found themselves with no dogs.

We recently visited someone who had a dog, and my kids were enamored with that little, hyperactive house dog. Within a few days, I found the following note from Alex, our ten-year-old son, on my phone:

Why Alex Should Get A Dog: I am responsible. My room is clean. I am selfless. I really like dogs. I will run with the dog. I will buy the dog food. I will clean up his mess. I will train him to not jump on mom and dad. I will teach him tricks. I will potty train him.

Although I admired Alex's efforts, I still was not inclined to get him a dog. While Alex's points were simple and cute, those same points did show his willingness to take ownership of his desired pet. His note caused me to think of responsibility in regard to our Oneida students and the things we attempt to teach them. We have so much structure and many programs that we use to teach our kids responsibility. If you would look back at Alex's first three points, which were, "I am responsible. My room is clean. I am selfless," you can read some of the very things we attempt to teach Oneida students. Responsibility, effort, and selflessness are all traits that our youth today, and even our adults today, seem to be sorely lacking. The Oneida setting is ideal for teaching these values.

If you ask our students what they dislike the most about OBI, they will typically mention something about rules and food. Those rules they reference represent the structure that they need, but don't want. Having a pet is a big responsibility, and being a student at OBI is also a large challenge. Everything we do is geared toward helping young people find success that will last for both time and eternity.

Come and visit Oneida sometime this fall. If you do, I doubt you will find another dog at the Gritton house, but I guarantee you that we will show and tell you about the many programs that make our kids responsible enough to not only care for a pet, but to become soldiers of the cross and also good citizens.



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