

THIS IS ONEIDA DOWN ON THE FARM

Oneida has many moving parts that work in unison to provide our young people with an “Education for Time and Eternity.” When I share our student numbers with folks and also share the size of our staff, I often get some funny looks. Many schools would love to have 135 staff members serving 325 students. I typically follow the sharing of our numbers with the mention of our kitchen staff, houseparents around the clock in our dormitories, and our working farm. It takes a large staff to make Oneida thrive.

For most of our history, a very intricate part of our ministry has been our farm. In 1909 Elizabeth Milbank Anderson, after hearing OBI founder, James Anderson Burns, speak at Madison Avenue Baptist Church in New York, followed him to the elevator and asked, “Mr. Burns, what is it you want?” He replied, “I want a farm for our boys.” The following day, Burns received a check for \$5,300 from Mrs. Anderson with a note saying, “Here is your farm.”

On our farm, we say the kids are the crops. We have pigs, cattle, goats, sheep, chickens, crops, and more. Some of what we do puts food on our table, but a large part of what we do on our farm centers on our young people. All of Oneida’s dormitory students are required to have a job. Participation in a varsity sport qualifies as a job, but most of our kids work for an hour a day. Many of those working students choose to work on our farm. Other students who are sent to the farm for disciplinary reasons may not enjoy the work as much as the 40 or so kids who choose to work there.

I recently spent an afternoon on our farm. I wasn’t well prepared, and was wearing my normal shirt and tie attire. In spite of my poor choice of clothing, I was blessed to be better educated in seeing what our kids do after school each day. They start with a student-led devotion, and then head out to their jobs. Some work with lettuce and tomatoes being hydroponically grown in our greenhouses. Some do vaccinations for our pigs. Others wrestle cattle. Some shovel. Some feed animals...and much, much more.

I enjoyed seeing all that I saw, but what I enjoyed most was seeing the love and direction our farm staff offers to our kids on a daily basis. Make no mistake about it; the young people on our farm are presented the good news of Jesus Christ and they are loved beyond measure.

Your love and support enables us to use our farm as a ministry to our young people, and for that we are grateful. Come and see our farm and how God uses our people and even our animals to show His love to so many kids.



Larry A. Gritton, Jr.
OBI President

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