



Founded in 1899

# ONEIDA MOUNTAINEER

Education for Time and Eternity

A bi-monthly newsletter of Oneida Baptist Institute

May / June 2008

## Connecting You

This year's Kentucky Baptist Convention theme (Connecting You To Missions) could not have better described the ministry at Oneida Baptist Institute. That's why we chose to adopt the theme for this year's Father's Day Offering.

In the brochure being mailed to over 2,400 Kentucky Baptist churches, we outline how OBI is fulfilling the Lord's commission from **Acts 1:8b** - *And you shall be witnesses to me...in Jerusalem...in Judea...in Samaria...and to the ends of the earth.* We have the unique privilege of educating students from all over the world within the borders of our rural campus.

### **God brings the world to our doorstep!**

#### **Jerusalem-Local**

OBI honors its 108-year heritage by educating children from the local community. Day students who choose to receive a private, Christian education at OBI are always welcome at no expense. These young people often express that being exposed to a diverse student body is one of the things they enjoy most about attending OBI.

#### **Judea-State**

Approximately 60% of our students are from Kentucky. Some needed an alternative to their home or school environments. Others wanted to attend an affordable Christian school. Many enrolled at OBI simply because they heard about it at church.

#### **Samaria-National**

About 25% of Oneida's students come from other states. For some who live in large cities, OBI provided a safe place free of distractions where they could focus on academics and their future. These teens enjoy the opportunities they might not have had at home like joining sports without try-outs or working on the farm.

#### **Ends of the Earth-International**

Another 15% of OBI students are internationals. The 2007-08 school year brought us young people from 12 other nations. ESL classes are an important part of our ministry to these students. Many of our international students are not Christians when they enroll. While they attend OBI, they learn of a loving Creator and His plan for the redemption of mankind.



## To Missions

Your continued prayer and support makes you a part of this effort to provide an *Education for Time* (students gain knowledge and life skills) and *Eternity* (young people hear the Gospel and see Christian faith in action) to hundreds of teens each year.

If you are a Kentucky Baptist, one way you can support OBI is by promoting the Father's Day Offering at church. The annual KBC-approved offering for Oneida affords us the opportunity to inform or remind thousands of people of the vital ministry to teens taking place in southeastern Kentucky.

## Meet some members of OBI's Class of 2008

### Trey chose OBI because it was 'different'



Trey enjoyed the unity he experienced in OBI's diverse student body.

Trey is a "local boy" with family ties to Oneida and OBI. His grandmother worked in the kitchen for over 35 years and was known to OBI students as "Granny." He had an aunt who also worked for several years in the kitchen. Trey's father, brother and sister are OBI alumni.

Trey began attending OBI in kindergarten. His mother worked in our kitchen at the time. Trey said he continued his education at OBI as he got older, because, "I just like it. It's just different. I'd rather be in a Christian school. I have lots of friends in [public school], but I was never interested."

Trey most appreciated that at OBI there was a sense of unity among a very diverse group of students. "Everybody can come together and have fun. You don't have to be any certain

(See **Trey** continued page 4)

## Steven was able to pass his classes and graduate



Steven was a four-year member of the OBI choir.

From central Kentucky, Steven enrolled at OBI as a freshman. He and his parents picked up a brochure about Oneida at church. "I needed a place to go," Steven recalled. He said that he has always struggled with paying attention. "I started failing everything. I needed a change," he said.

At OBI, Steven said, "Everybody here was friendly, and the teachers wanted to help me. They were very caring. They come to you and ask if you need help. I started passing more and more classes. I still failed a few, but I made them up in summer school," Steven said. Required nightly study hall was a help. "Instead of just goofing around, I did my homework."

A member of the OBI choir all four years of high school, Steven enjoyed traveling and singing with such a diverse group. His senior year, he was accepted into the All Festival Chorus, a regional honor choir.

Steven was used to having jobs at home, so work at OBI was no surprise to him. He said, "I had to learn a couple things." His first job was cleaning the chapel, and "I had never vacuumed before." He became a crew supervisor. "I worked my way up. I don't think I've ever been to work late," he said. His senior year, Steven was in charge of distributing cleaning supplies to the campus crews.

Both Steven and his parents are happy to see him graduate. "At my last school, I might not have," he said. He plans to work for a car dealership. He noted, "I'm really good at math, so financial stuff is pretty easy for me." ■

## Christle needed a second chance

Christle came to OBI from central Kentucky for her senior year. "I did it to please my grandmother," she said, "but I feel like I was here for a reason." For behavior reasons, Christle was asked to leave her last residence—her fifth home and third state in which to live. "I was kind of being juggled," she said.

At OBI, Christle learned responsibility as she navigated her school and work schedule. She enjoyed the chance to earn encouragement and trust for exhibiting dependability at her job on the farm. She was also a cheerleader and a member of the choir.

"I had to be responsible, which is something I've never had to do. I wanted to be better and Oneida was a place I could change. Here, people tell you, 'Good job,' or 'I'm proud of you... keep up the good work,'" she said.

Spiritually, Christle felt she had the space at OBI to reflect on past mistakes and allow the Lord to change her heart. Her relationships with staff and students boosted her self-confidence. "I was always scared about what people



Christle learned responsibility in jobs and cocurriculars

thought. My closest friend helped me a lot. She was so sweet and caring. She just accepted me. I developed the ability to trust people and to make friends, to be myself. This is the happiest I've been in my whole life."

One of her most enjoyable activities this year was the FFA steer showing program. Her time on the farm helped her to form a career goal. She plans to become a veterinary technician. ■

## Kyle became 'more focused' on academics at OBI



Kyle developed his interest in computer work at his Field Placement job.

Kyle came to OBI as a sophomore from central Kentucky after a visit to his church by OBI president, Dr. W.F. Underwood. "I came here to raise my grades and to graduate," Kyle said.

With more effort on Kyle's part, more attention from teachers and OBI's required nightly study hall, Kyle's grades began to show improvement. "I got more focused, and smaller classes do help," he added. He attended summer school his junior year to make up

some credits and stay on schedule for graduation. He was voted the Most Outstanding junior boy by the faculty. "I was a little surprised by that, because I didn't always make the best grades. I was at least respectful. I was shy, but I knew I could go to my teachers for help," he said.

Kyle grew to enjoy the boarding school experience. "It's sort of like college. I liked the freedom," he said. Having privileges instead of consequences made it easy for Kyle to make right choices. In the dorm, Kyle said the rules were simple: "Keep your room clean, do your laundry and stay clean yourself... basic stuff."

Known for his dependability in the dorm and at work, Kyle earned Outstanding Worker awards. "I liked to see what I accomplished each day and that I did a good job," he said. He was the dorm office cleaner and a manager for the soccer team. In the Field Placement program this year, Kyle worked in the computer lab. "I'd like to do something like that when I get out of high school," he said. He plans to join the Marines. ■

## Agnes found 'stepping stones to... starting over'

Agnes arrived at OBI at the end of eighth grade. She said she had become rebellious as a teenager. "I was in this stage where I was doing things I shouldn't be doing. I was in horrible rebellion. I was kicked out of my house several times. I would stay with our babysitter until my mom cooled down," Agnes said. She was sent to a three-week "survival camp" for teens. The people at the camp recommended Oneida Baptist Institute to Agnes and her family.

Agnes was born in Hungary. She remembers well the orphanage she lived in until she was adopted by a couple from California. Agnes was about six or seven years old. She can't be sure, because her birth records in Hungary are unclear. She was excited about being adopted, but she faced enormous challenges beginning with learning English. When she finally attended school, she had trouble understanding. She remembers spending three or four hours a night at home reviewing school work with her mom and still getting bad grades. By eighth grade, Agnes was ready to give up. "I didn't think I was worth anything, so why should I do anything, period?" she said.

Agnes agreed to come to Oneida but said, "When I first came to OBI, I was so angry. I didn't like a lot of the rules. I got suspended many times for stupid stuff I could have chosen not to do." One of the times she was suspended, Agnes remembers the kindness of a volunteer who prayed with her before she began her day of work. "She prayed that it would go well and that I would learn my lesson. I'll never forget that," she said.

Agnes struggled through her freshman year with grades and behavior, but her sophomore year became a turning point. "I had kind of matured. My slate was clean," she said. She began to focus on activities and interests rather than problems. Her junior year, she joined the FFA's steer training program where she learned perseverance. Each morning before school, she worked with her assigned steer. "My steer was the meanest one. I wanted to quit that steer, but they said 'no.' After that, he warmed up to me and did great," Agnes

recalled. She enjoyed learning how to lead and groom the animal and earned a second place ribbon at the county livestock show.

Agnes also had an interest in sports, which motivated her to keep her grades up to remain eligible. She joined soccer, cheerleading, softball and volleyball. She went to state in cross country her senior year.

As she gained confidence, Agnes interacted more with adults. "I never liked to talk to the houseparents or the teachers. I opened up to them, and my opinion of myself and my perspective improved," she said.

Her grades continued to climb to B's and C's by her junior year. The faculty voted her the Most Improved junior girl. "I felt good about that," Agnes said. As a senior, she was proud to report A's and B's. "Now, I'm glad I came here. I understand why OBI sets rules. It's just to get you prepared for reality. OBI protects you from going into drugs and doing all the things kids might pressure you into doing. OBI provides the stepping stones to improving, starting over and getting better."

Agnes remembers occasionally attending church with her grandmother when she was younger. She had to adjust to attending daily chapel and Sunday services at OBI. Though she is still uncertain about her personal relationship with God, countless seeds of truth were planted during her five years at Oneida. Agnes said, "I do believe in God, and I do believe in Jesus Christ. I'm not foolish. I guess I'm still questioning." She added that she has an interest in worldwide missions and plans to "do



*Activities helped Agnes focus on school instead of problems.*

## Ben got back on track



*Ben improved both work and study habits.*

Ben came to Oneida as a sophomore from New Jersey. His brother graduated from OBI in 1998. Ben said, "School started to get really frustrating. I had bad grades, and I never did my work. I probably would have dropped out," he said. He agreed with his mother that he needed a change.

Ben passed all of his classes his first year at OBI. When the guidance counselor met with him at the start of his junior year, Ben saw the results of his hard work. "I was really happy. I had my credits. They got me back on the right track to graduate with my class," he said. "The teachers can teach you better at Oneida, because they have [fewer] kids to deal with," he added.

Three years of dorm chores and required daily jobs and sports practices helped Ben develop good work habits. "My work ethic is better. I'm used to working every day," he said. It wasn't always this way. He recalled his first day of school at OBI, when he returned to the dorm for a nap: "I heard this knock-knock-knock on my door. It was Mr. 'J.' He said, 'You're late for work.' I had to work every day? I was mad."

Ben knows he has improved, because he is different at home. "I do a lot of stuff in the house. I take out the trash, mop the kitchen floor and repair things. Before, I would just go out. Now, I help my mom and then go out. She's glad that I'm graduating this year, and she's glad she sent me here. She got a lazy child off her hands," Ben said.

In college, Ben would like to study criminal justice or forensic science and play basketball. "If it happens and God wants it, that's what I'll do," he said. ■

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## Meet some members of OBI's *Class of 2008*



*For Rebecca, sports was a way to relieve stress.*

### Rebecca found independence

Rebecca is originally from Malaysia. She moved to Louisiana with her mother, who married a U.S. citizen. She has two brothers and a sister. The family now lives in Georgia.

Rebecca said she had become "very hard headed..." a side-effect of living in an orphanage when she was younger. "I had to stand up for myself and for my sister and brother. I got in a lot of trouble," she said. In America, she struggled with following rules and getting along with her parents.

Rebecca was in the seventh grade when she and her older brother, Roy, came to Oneida. "I didn't really mind. It was kind of hard to get used to the rules, but I got used to it," she said. She made several friends who "were closer to me than my family."

At OBI, Rebecca found a niche in sports. One reason she enjoyed playing: "You don't think about your problems. If I'm angry, I play harder. I put everything on the floor or field," she said. She earned the 110% award in soccer, cross country and track and the Best Attitude award in basketball. The OBI faculty voted Rebecca the Most Outstanding freshman girl. "I don't think I would have done as well somewhere else," she said. ■

### Sol wanted to study in the U.S.

Sol from Korea spent her sophomore year at a school in California as part of an exchange program. She wanted to continue her education in America and learned about OBI from a friend.

Sol enjoyed OBI's cocurriculars. "I think it's a unique experience that I got to be in band and drama," she said. She acted in two school plays and joined the pep band after learning to play the saxophone. She explored graphic design and sign-making in commercial art classes. "I think it's really cool. I learned a lot," she said. She plans to study fine arts at an American university.

Living in the OBI dormitory exposed Sol to American culture and customs. She observed, "We are different people, and we come from whole different backgrounds, but it



*Sol enjoyed the chance to participate in cocurriculars.*

Does your church need additional materials for the **Father's Day Offering**? Just give us a call at: **606-847-4111 ext. 204** or email: [denise.spencer@oneidaschool.org](mailto:denise.spencer@oneidaschool.org).



*(Trey continued from page 1)*

type. It doesn't matter where you're from. I just got along with everybody," Trey said.

Another plus was his teachers at OBI. "The teachers are really nice. It felt like the teachers made you learn here, instead of just telling you what [seat work] to do," he said. His middle school teachers voted him the Most Improved seventh grade boy that year.

Being a day student benefited Trey his senior year. He was allowed to keep his off-campus job at an automotive body shop and receive class credit for it at the same time. Trey asked the administrator of OBI's Field Placement program if his job would qualify. "Mrs. Belcher and my boss talked back and forth about it," Trey said. He had to sign in each day at work and complete the regular Field Placement assignments, including keeping a daily journal of his job activities.

Trey plans to attend college and pursue studies in two areas. One is undecided, but the other area is guitar. Having played all his life, he looks forward to the opportunity of working with college-level instructors. ■