

THIS IS ONEIDA BEDTIME FOR 300 KIDS

There are many tasks a parent will perform over and over for his or her children. If you are a parent, have you ever thought about how many diapers you changed, how many times you shuttled your child somewhere, how many loads of laundry you did, how many dishes you washed, etc? If we actually knew the answers to these questions, we would probably be shocked.

There are some tasks as parents that we don't necessarily enjoy, and then there are others that bring us a great joy. Perhaps some things you do or have done for your child fit into both of those categories. My oldest son, Trey, is 13 years old and sleeps in our basement. Upon first moving to Kentucky, he was only 11 years old, and it took some time before he was comfortable sleeping in the basement by himself. For a few months, he often found his way up to his little brother's room and crawled into the top bunk. Now Trey sleeps downstairs pretty willingly, but he likes for me to come downstairs at bedtime to say goodnight and pray with him. Due to being away some nights, I don't always get to do this, and on the nights I am home it sometimes takes some motivation to get up out of my easy chair and go downstairs. I know I should relish this nightly routine, because there may soon be coming a day that Trey won't want me anywhere near his basement or bedroom.

As I sit on the edge of Trey's bed and we sometimes pray for the Oneida students, I sometimes wonder about the kids in our dorm and what their bedtime routines were at home with their parents and what each of them might be thinking as they turn in for bed each night here at Oneida. When you have 200-250 students in the dormitory any given night, each kid won't get the bedtime tuck-in and prayer time with mom or dad. We have many students who are younger than my 13-year-old, and those young people have to grow up at an accelerated rate when living independently from their parents.

We have about 20 houseparents on our staff. I often tell folks it is probably the most difficult job on our campus. Bedtime is 10:00 p.m. on school nights and 11:00 p.m. on weekends. Imagine putting 125 boys and 100 girls to bed all at once. Our houseparents face challenges in caring for our young people every single day, but they love and care for our kids as if there were their own. Please pray for our houseparents as they fill a major role in the lives of so many of God's children.



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