

## **THIS IS ONEIDA ANSWERING THE ONEIDA CALL**

*The following is an account from Mr. John Monday, a new staff member, about what it is like to join the Oneida team.*

It was late July when I arrived in Oneida with my wife and four kids. We had come to visit only once before as a family, but this time it was permanent. There was no going back to Jacksonville, Florida after a weekend stay. Jacksonville had been our home for the last 19 years. It was where I had met my future wife. It was where our four kids were born, and where we had started, grown, and come to love our church family. There were times between April and July of this year when I would look at my wife and ask her if she was still sure she wanted to move to a little town in southeast Kentucky. But we both knew why we were coming. It is an honor and a privilege to be serving our Lord at Oneida. The people who also work alongside us are a special kind of people as well, and this is something I've said to several around us. Oneida is a place where the ministry potentially never ends. And it is this ministry that continues to drive us.

I am struck by how many different ways there are to serve here at Oneida. Not just service to the kids, for that is obviously a given, but service to one another. I have seen a helpfulness and real understanding among the faculty of Oneida. There is a general bearing of one another's burdens that makes me strive to be more Christ-like every day.

There is also a sincerity of heart here among the workers that I have not seen anywhere else. The volunteers who come to Oneida and freely give their time and resources without thought for what they get in return are humbling to me. From the small groups to the "brace yourself for impact" really large groups that come, the sincerity with which they serve and work alongside us continues to urge me on to do good to those around me.

On top of all of these, there is the seriousness of what we are doing here. Every day, I see kids who have come here for countless reasons, and have trusted us to do what is right. Not only have the kids put their trust in us, but the parents as well. They have chosen to entrust us with the lives and nurturing to godliness of their children. There is a visible, daily accountability here to drive me to godliness and make me remember that my life is not my own here at Oneida. My life, along with all of the teachers and staff, is daily being poured into the lives of these kids.

It is the combination of the service, the work of sincere hearts, and the seriousness of our charges that really drives me to trust in our Lord for strength to do what is right. My family has only been here for three months, and as I sit and think about all that has happened in those three short months, I am grateful for the faithfulness that God has shown us in providing for us and giving us the ability that we have to work and serve along with all of the saints who are here at Oneida.



**Larry A. Gritton, Jr.  
OBI President**

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