

## **THIS IS ONEIDA MAKING A DIFFERENCE**

The story isn't new, but it doesn't have to be. All it has to be is true in its essential message:

*An old man had a habit of early morning walks on the beach. One day, after a storm, he saw a human figure in the distance moving like a dancer. As he came closer he saw that it was a young woman and she was not dancing but was reaching down to the sand, picking up a starfish and very gently throwing them into the ocean. "Young lady," he asked, "Why are you throwing starfish into the ocean?" "The sun is up, and the tide is going out, and if I do not throw them in they will die." "But young lady, do you not realize that there are miles and miles of beach and starfish all along it? You cannot possibly make a difference." The young woman listened politely, paused and then bent down, picked up another starfish and threw it into the sea, past the breaking waves, saying, "It made a difference for that one." The old man looked at the young woman inquisitively and thought about what she had done. Inspired, he joined her in throwing starfish back into the sea. Soon others joined, and all the starfish were saved.*

Making a temporal and eternal difference in the lives of children from around the world is what OBI is all about. There will always be more children than we can personally touch who need to hear about and see the love of Christ in action in their lives. Who better to enlist for the ministry of reaching out to children in need than those teenagers who themselves are being touched by Christ and thereby being prepared to be world-changers in the future?

With that thought in mind, we recently welcomed David Mupenda, a citizen of the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) who works with the ministry of International Christian Bible Reading under the auspices of Commission to the Nations, to share about his work in DRC, Rwanda, and Burundi with orphans who lost their parents through AIDS, civil war, or genocide. After learning about the scope of the need, our Baptist Campus Ministry students sponsored a silent dessert auction to raise funds from among our students and ministry team members to assist with the needs of the 108 orphans to whom Bro. Mupenda is currently ministering in Burundi. In one hectic hour we were able to collect \$950 – a generous sum considering that most of our students receive less than \$3 personal spending money each day.

To prepare our students to make an ongoing difference in the world, we'll need to do something more than just have a silent auction from time to time. We plan to involve the students in an ongoing way to "adopt" needy children somewhere around the world by simply taking \$1 of each student's school fees per month and funding the sponsorship through one or more Christian aid organizations, leading the students to write the letters, send the gifts, and communicate with the children on a regular basis. If they can learn to care for others in need, who knows what the Lord will do in their own lives, too!



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