

THIS IS ONEIDA VACATION AT ONEIDA

In late July, our year-round staff took a much needed and well deserved time of vacation. Since all the students and the vast majority of our staff were gone, Angie, the kids, and I hit the road for a vacation of our own. We had purchased a camper in April, and decided to pull it all the way to Canada. We were hoping for cooler weather up north. It was unusually hot, but we had fun nonetheless.

Growing up a staff kid at Oneida, I remember most of our vacations to be trips to see family, but there was the occasional trip to the beach or to Florida and Disney World. What I remember most about those trips was the journey, and being on the road with my family. My own kids seem to fuss and complain in our fairly spacious sport utility vehicle, but I recall a trip to Florida in which seven of us traveled in a Chevrolet Caprice Classic.

I have often shared Angie's story across this state, and many of you know she came from a broken home. She did not get to enjoy family vacations until some of our OBI staff began to make her a part of their family trips. I like getting away from time to time, but often find our trips to be expensive and tiring. Angie probably feels the same way, but I believe our family trips are more important to her than they are to me, mainly because she didn't have that as a kid.

With a smaller number of students on campus during the summer months, we are often able to do some off campus outings with them. We took them to two different water parks and on an off campus scavenger hunt. I did not attend any of those events, but I did do a water park with my own kids in Erie, Pennsylvania. Before that park visit, I had told Angie I was getting too old to ride stuff with the kids. A broken toe in the wave pool and a badly bruised or even cracked rib while riding a rickety, wooden roller coaster later proved my point. In spite of my injuries, I pressed on, and in spite of the challenges we face each and every day at Oneida, we press on toward the prize to which God has called us.

Even when we are away, our brains seem to always be locked into all-things-Oneida mode. We often discuss and think about our mission here. While on our Canadian excursion, we talked about many of our Oneida kids probably not really having many family vacations, either. I doubt very many of our students look at their time at OBI as a vacation, but perhaps it is a fresh start and a second chance to succeed, or a permanent vacation from past trials.



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